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THE POWER OF WEAKNESS: COERCION IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE NETWORK IN ASIA

by

Noelle C. Troutman

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Political Science

Under the Supervision of Professor Rupal N. Mehta

Lincoln, Nebraska

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THE POWER OF WEAKNESS: COERCION IN THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE NETWORK IN ASIA

Noelle C. Troutman, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska, 2023

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How can a weaker ally, or 'protégé' coerce their stronger partner, or 'patron' for greater autonomy? My primary argument is that protégés have agency; they can and do coerce their patron. I ask two interrelated questions within this study. First, when can allied preferences diverge? Second, if allied disagreement is likely, how can a protégé coerce their patron for greater autonomy? I argue that protégés with insecure regimes can threaten their own collapse to get their patron to give into their demands. This is a tough lie to get away with; patrons are therefore likely to concede when their protégé does threaten it. Failure to do so would waste resources the patron has, and may currently, contribute to the protégé's defense. I test the theory with case work on the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliances. My findings support the theory; protégés can and do coerce their patrons for greater autonomy.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Dirk and Beth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION …….....1

CHAPTER 2: THEORY……..……..15

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN …….....41

CHAPTER 4: U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE…..…..……...52

CHAPTER 5: U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE…...……...…81

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION…...……..…124

WORKS CITED…….……133

TABLES AND FIGURES

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

Figure 1: Defense Autonomy …….…….....31

Figure 2: Protégé's Ability to Coerce ……..……..……..35

CHAPTER 4: U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE

Figure 1: South Korean Regime Opposition Group Size…….....54

Table 1: Episodes of Analysis in U.S.-ROK Relations …..….……..……...55

Figure 2: ROK Defense Autonomy …...……...…57

Figure 3: ROK Regime Security ……..……..……...64

CHAPTER 5: U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

Figure 1: Japan Regime Group Opposition Size …..……...…….…82

Table 1: Episodes of Analysis in U.S.-ROK Relations…….83

Figure 2: Japanese Defense Autonomy……..……86

Figure 3: Japanese Regime Security……..…95

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The end of World War II ushered in a new era of American alignment; one driven by ideological fervor over strategic practicality (Gaddis 2005). The United States created vast alliance networks in Europe and Asia (Sayle 2019; Izumikawa 2020). The goal behind the creation of the American alliance network in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was to "keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" (Ringsmose 2010). This sentiment is also true of the U.S. alliance network in Asia—with one exception. American decision-makers considered European security as vital to their own; Asian security was not (Cha 2016). The United States was so focused on keeping Russia out of Asia that it struggled to keep its allies—South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines down—despite creating a series of bilateral alliances designed to do just that (Cha 2016).

Consider U.S.-ROK relations during the Korean War. The United States offered South Korea a military alliance to keep it in line; defending ROK sovereignty was secondary (Cha 2011; 2016). American military consensus held that "South Korea was not regarded as of any particular value to the overall American strategic position in the Far East," with reports from the Mutual Defense Assistance Program[1] stating, "there is no military justification for military assistance to Korea" (FRUS May 10, 1950; Lowe 2014). In addition to a perceived lack of strategic value, American officials surmised, "President Rhee's strongest weapon is his knowledge that the U.S. could not let the Republic of Korea fall without incurring the gravest political repercussions," and that, "the time might

[1] Established under the Truman Administration after passing the 1949 Mutual Defense Act. This program enabled the United States to provide military and economic assistance to states for enhancing their defensive capabilities against the Soviet Union and its allies. It was eventually succeeded by the Mutual Security Act and the Mutual Security Administration in 1951 (Connery and David 1951).

come when the lesser of the two evils would be to cut loose and run the risk of incurring such consequences" (FRUS Mar. 15, 1950). The United States sought to minimize its role in Korea as much as possible, including Secretary of State Dean Acheson's lack of reference to the Korean Peninsula when defining the U.S. defense perimeter in Asia in 1950,

> "The defensive perimeter [of the United States] runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus… So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against a military attack. But it must also be clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship" (Central Intelligence Agency 1950).

The North Korean Kim Il-Sung government, backed by tacit Soviet and Chinese support, invaded South Korea shortly after, starting the Korean War. Under the American led coalition, Rhee gave control of the South Korean military to the commander of the United Nations Command.[2] Although the U.S. and ROK were not bound by formal treaty commitments, the United States entered the war and accepted the responsibility of South Korea's military defense to both stop communist advances into East Asia and restrain the Rhee government (Stueck 1995; Hong 2000). American attempts to compel the Rhee regime without formal treaty commitments were dismal at best. Rhee threatened to remove his forces from UN Command authority and to launch the push north himself if the United States continued with armistice talks. In an exchange with the Commander in Chief of United Nations Command, General Clark, regarding a possible armistice, Rhee dismissed attempts for compromise. Instead arguing, "Through suicide Korea would at least go down in the history as a nation of great honor" (Clark 1954).

[2] General MacArthur was removed as the Commander in Chief of United Nations Command by President Truman on April 11, 1951. Truman immediately installed General Ridgway who left May 12, 1951. General Clark succeeded General Ridgeway and remained in command until the signing of the Korean armistice in 1953 (Park 1975; Boose 2000).

American concern over Rhee's intransigence led to the circulation of plan 'EVERREADY' by General Taylor, Commander of the United States Eighth Army in Korea. The plan outlined conditions under which the United States would overthrow the Rhee government. These conditions included unresponsiveness or defiance by the South Korean army to UN Command directives, South Korean unilateral military actions, and even the possibility of ROK military hostility toward UN Command. Should these conditions be sufficiently met, EVERREADY called for actions to cut off all aid and assistance to South Korea, cutting off key ports and supply lines for the ROK military, and potentially declaring martial law under the authority of the United Nations (FRUS May 4, 1953). Further American attempts to sway Rhee into accepting an armistice for unspecified American aid guarantees proved unsuccessful.

Upon being presented with these conditions, Rhee told Ambassador Briggs that "Korea may publicly denounce US/UN armistice proposals," and that "the ROK will not be bound by them, and may offer an alternative solution based on simultaneous withdrawal of Chinese Communists and UN forces, leaving Koreans to settle Korean problems" (FRUS May 26, 1953). Rhee followed up with his threat of unilateral action in a discussion with General Clark, stating that, "we [ROK] are at a point where we cannot drag any longer...Now is the time, do not turn back and be weak. Democracy is going backwards. Some day the United States will fight alone. Do not wait for that day." In addition to requests for increased American support, Rhee rejected any American aid short of his demands for complete unification under his government stating, "We [ROK] will die, we will go alone, one way or the other," further requesting that Clark report to Eisenhower, "Please let the Koreans fight on alone. It is the only way they can survive.

This is my solemn request to President Eisenhower… I cannot promise the President my military cooperation without the unification of Korea… We made our mistake perhaps in the beginning in relying upon democracy to assist us" (FRUS May 26, 1953). Plan EVERREADY was once again debated in Washington—with officials weighing the utility of alignment to overthrow:

> **Mr. Robertson**[3]: [in response to potentially initiating plan EVERREADY] "Under what authority should we take over the Korean Government? Wouldn't we really be putting ourselves in a position of being the aggressors?
>
> **General Collins**: The authority for taking action against Rhee and the Korean Government would have to be purely of that military necessity… Another question… we should look into, is whether or not it would be useful to give Rhee the promise of a security pact in order to forestall the actions he might otherwise take.
>
> **Admiral Duncan**: It seems to me that if Rhee is not brought into line we will be faced with the possibility of a disastrous military defeat. If the final issue between Rhee and ourselves appears to be whether or not we would give him a security pact it might well be worth giving Rhee such a pact in order to keep him in line" (FRUS May 29, 1953).

Eisenhower authorized Ambassador Briggs and General Clark to report American willingness to immediately begin defense treaty negotiations subject to 1) South Korea accepting an armistice with the Communists, and 2) South Korea keeping its military under UNC control. General Clark was told to make American institutional constraints clear, "The ROK must understand that [the] conclusion of a treaty is subject to U.S. constitutional processes requiring the advice and consent of the Senate. ROK cooperation with the UNC will undoubtedly be a major factor in the attitude of the Senate toward ratification of any such treaty" (FRUS May 30, 1953).

[3] Walter S. Robertson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs from 1953-1959 (New York Times 1970).

Upon receipt of this offer, Rhee wrote to Eisenhower in hesitant agreement to pursue a treaty dialogue (FRUS May 30, 1953). However, the U.S. had little leverage over Rhee in the absence of a treaty. Following a particularly disturbing meeting with the Rhee government, General Clark reported, "I made absolutely no progress in my effort to persuade Rhee to take a reasonable approach to armistice terms. I have never seen him more distracted, wrought up, and emotional." Rhee argued that that U.S. policy was weak and amounted to appeasement, further stating, "The ROK Government would never accept the present terms of the armistice, that the ROKs would fight on, even if it meant suicide, and that he would lead them," and "That from anytime hereafter he would feel free to take such steps that he deems appropriate." Clark reported to the Joint Chiefs,

> "I asked Rhee if his statements meant withdrawing his troops from UN Command. He said not today or tomorrow, but he would feel free to take any action from now on. I told him how futile it would be for him to attempt to attack alone, for he would be unsuccessful and does not have the necessary logistical support, and that it would result in destruction of himself and his country, and urged him that he show the strong leadership he has displayed in the past and the kind his country expects of him now in an emergency. He indicated that Korea would become another China; it is inevitable and he and his people may as well die now as later… To summarize Rhee was completely unreasonable and gave no ground whatsoever. He himself is the only one who knows how far he will go but undoubtedly he will bluff right up to the last (FRUS Jun. 7, 1953)."

Further exacerbating American uncertainty about ROK interests, President Rhee deliberately undermined armistice negotiations in one of his most defiant acts against the United States by releasing unilaterally releasing 27,000 prisoners of war held in the South under UN Command authority on June 18, 1953 (Bernstein 1978; The New York Times 1956; Cha 2016). The POW camps under UN Command were primarily guarded by members of the ROK army who were ordered to simultaneously open the gates of the prison camps and release the prisoners. American forces guarding these camps were largely outnumbered by their South Korean counterparts and were met with violent

opposition in their attempt to stop the release. Civilians were instructed to house prisoners and local police forces were ordered to inform civilians of American attempts to recapture these prisoners (Hong 1999). In response to the release, President Eisenhower stated, "We seemed to have acquired another enemy instead of a friend" (FRUS Jun. 18, 1953).

As indicated above, the behavior of weaker allies can have a major impact on allied relations. I therefore ask: how can weaker allies coerce their stronger partner for greater autonomy in international politics? I examine the U.S. alliance network in Asia; alliances defined by severe hierarchy favoring American dominance. Conventional wisdom holds that the United States should be able to dictate the interests of their Asian allies without them pushing back. Put simply, when the U.S. says "jump," its Asian allies should ask "how high?" But this is not always the case; there are conditions under which weaker allies, or protégés, can coerce their stronger partner, or patron, for greater autonomy. By coercion, I refer to threatening violence to get one's target to behave in a way they would not otherwise (Schelling 1966; Lake 2011). Autonomy is a state's control over its own affairs—especially its domestic politics (Schweller 2004).

Consider ROK interest in acquiring French Exocet missiles in the 1970s (Hayes 1993). South Korea suffered a series of embarrassing defeats by the North Korean Navy and sought Harpoon anti-ship missiles from the United States to deter further DPRK incursions into ROK waters (Kim and Vogel 2011). The United States refused to sell South Korea advanced missile technology out of concern the ROK military would use them to attack North Korea. ROK officials feared American abandonment and told the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Philip Habib, "If you cannot provide the missile

propellant, we'll buy it from the French" (FRUS Jan. 6, 1975). South Korea followed through on this threat and purchased comparable Exocet missiles from the French despite American condemnation. ROK President Park Chung Hee told U.S. Embassy officials,

> "If the US was not prepared to assist [in ROK missile acquisition], then Korea would seek aid from third countries," because "Korea 'must be prepared for [a] rainy day.' It would be too late if Korea waited to develop its missile capacity until [the] US informs ROKG that it plans to withdraw its forces" (National Security Archive May 1, 1975).

Rather than punish ROK intransigence, the United States gave in. The U.S. "suddenly and unexpectedly" agreed to sell South Korea Harpoon missiles (Kim and Vogel 2011). This was not a coincidence; South Korea coerced the United States to give into its demands. Prior work would predict that because of the severe military and economic disparity between allies, South Korea should not have been able to defy the United States (Snyder 1984; Morrow 1993; Gerzhoy 2015; Castillo and Downes 2020). By 1969, South Korean GDP per capita was $243.40 compared to $5,032.10 in the United States (World Bank). Adding to this disparity, the U.S. was pumping billions of dollars into the South Korean economy and military during this period (Kim 2007). But this conclusion is misleading. A careful read of history shows that South Korea was far more than an American puppet, it was actively dictating the interests of the alliance.

Argument in Brief

My primary argument is that weaker allies have agency; they can and do coerce their stronger partners for greater autonomy. The mechanism through which they do this is the shared fate they have with their patron. I define shared fate as an institutional tie that commits one's honor, obligation, and reputation to the preservation of that institution—in this case—alliance. However, a protégé's ability to leverage this shared fate to coerce their patron varies. I therefore ask two interrelated questions within this

study. First, when can allied preferences diverge? This question is particularly important for alliances defined by severe hierarchy like those in East Asia. The United States designed this alliance network to reflect its interests and to ensure it would not be challenged by its weaker allies. Second, if allied disagreement is likely, how can a protégé coerce their patron for greater autonomy?

I first consider the independence of a protégé's defense ministry and military from oversight by their patron or rival ministries within the protégé's executive branch. Doing so enables me to theorize about a protégé's control over their defense policy and its execution. A protégé with a controlled defense ministry is unlikely to challenge their patron because they are likely to draft policy that reflects the patron's interests. Even if a protégé has an independent military, they are unlikely to challenge their patron because the military is tasked with executing policy from above. Similarly, protégés with both an independent defense ministry and military are unlikely to challenge their patron because they don't need to; they have control over their own defense policy and its execution. They can disregard their patron's objections to pursue their own interests.

However, an independent defense ministry allows a protégé to make policies not in line with their patron's interests (Feaver 1999; Brooks 2019). This can create problems for protégés with controlled militaries, or those under their patron's command. Patrons are unlikely to support the protégé's execution of defense policy that runs contrary to the patron's interests. Protégés with independent defense ministries but controlled militaries are thus more likely to challenge their patron.

I then use conditions of allied disagreement to predict the likelihood of a protégé coercing their patron. A need for security may drive a protégé's motivation to form an

alliance with a more powerful partner, but a desire for autonomy supersedes security concerns following alliance formation. The basis for this lies in the protégé's fear of abandonment by their patron (Snyder 1991; 2007). To this end, protégés can leverage their own regime security to pry control away from an overbearing patron. Allies have a shared fate, or an institutional tie that commits their honor, obligation, and reputation to the preservation of their alliance. The behaviors of one ally, for better or worse, influence the other. Patrons then face a dilemma, either having to make significant concessions to their protégé or risk its collapse. I hypothesize that as a protégé's regime security decreases, they are more likely to coerce their patron. Insecure protégés threaten their own collapse when they run out of options. Indeed, what makes these threats credible to the patron is that the protégé does not have to lie about them—they are visible to both parties (Fravel 2005). It is the shared fate between allies that forces the patron's hand to give into their protégés demands for greater autonomy. Secure protégés on the other hand, are less likely to coerce their protégé; they don't need to. A secure protégé can justify going without resources their patron may provide for their defense should they find the patron's terms intolerable (Jackson 2007; McMahon et al. 2015; Bowers and Hiim 2020; Pempel 2021). This argument does not imply that proteges are never coerced by their patron—they are. Rather, that the role of weaker allies is often overlooked in alliance politics (Walt 2009; Christensen 2011; Beckley 2015).

This argument has clear policy implications; the United States must be mindful of the limits of its influence in East Asia. Within the last decade, the U.S. created a series of new networks to increase its reach into Asia to counter a rising China (Chowdhurry 2021; Cave and Wong 2023). It is impossible to understand the impact of these networks such

as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD or 'the Quad') or the trilateral security pact between the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (AUKUS) without understanding the preexisting alliance network in Asia. American allies are likely to vary in how they approach these institutions and their relationship with China. Japan is more likely to respond positively to American efforts to isolate China whereas South Korea will not. This is not because Japan is an inherently better ally than South Korea but because of the varying institutional factors outlined in my theory.

Japan lacks an independent military force. While the purview of its Self Defense Force has grown over the last decade—largely at the urging of the United States—it is constitutionally prohibited from engaging in war (Akaha 1998). The United States has been the primary guarantor of Japan's security since its defeat in 1945 (Shoichi 1997). The American occupation forces set up the Japanese state to lack robust security institutions—such as a defense ministry—that could challenge its authority (Chai 1997; Liff 2015).[4] While both the U.S. and Japan were optimistic about the ability of Japan to amend its anti-war constitution to allow for Japanese rearmament, the constitution remains unchanged (Liff and Maeda 2018).

In contrast, South Korea had far greater institutional autonomy from the United States at the start of its alliance (Klinger 2008). South Korea possessed both an independent defense ministry and military (Kim 2022). While its military is subject to American command, South Korea has greater freedom to dictate defense policy that differs from American interests given its independent defense ministry. This can create friction between allies as these policies trickle down to be executed by South Korea's

[4] Japan did not officially have a Ministry of Defense until 2007 (Liff 2015).

military who is responsible to the United States (Ehrhardt 2004/2005). South Korea, like Japan, has since taken greater authority over its defense since the formation of its alliance with the United States but American authority nonetheless remains constant. Given the historical and economic ties South Korea shares with China, it is unlikely jeopardize this relationship (Kang 2010; Choe 2022). South Korea, unlike Japan, can and is likely to push back or ignore American demands to isolate China.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 provides an overview of prior literature focusing specifically on the key concepts of the theory including autonomy, security, and coercion with a specific application to defensive military alliances. I then lay out my theory in full and describe conditions under which a protégé can coerce their patron for greater autonomy. I first argue the likelihood of allied disagreement based on the extent to which a patron controls the protégé's defense institutions, including their defense ministry and military. I then contend the likelihood of a protégé coercing their patron based on the protégé's regime security. In sum, I argue that protégés with insecure regimes are more likely to coerce their patron compared to secure protégés.

Chapter 3 lays out the research design used to test the theory. I write a series of historical case studies on the U.S.-South Korea and U.S.-Japan alliances. These cases trace a protégé's logic to coerce—or not—their patron for greater autonomy during an episode of disagreement. These cases allow for both within and between case comparison. Chapter 4 explores the U.S.-ROK alliance; a case in which a patron has control over their protégé's military but not their defense ministry. I show that South Korea did indeed coerce the United States during periods of low regime security

compared to periods of high regime insecurity. Chapter 5 examines the U.S.-Japan alliance. In contrast to the Korean case, Japan's defense institutions—including its defense ministry and military were both subject to oversight by the United States and other domestic ministries (Schaller 1985; Shoichi 1997). While falling short of coercion, Japan did push back harder against American demands during periods of low regime security compared to high regime security. Protégés should not be able to coerce their patron, and yet, my case work shows they can. The manner through which this coercion occurs is often nuanced; it is not easily reduced to a discrete observation for cross-sectional comparison. Thus, these cases are an important component of theory testing; they demonstrate when and why a patron gives in to a protege's demands.

I conclude this dissertation with Chapter 7. I lay out my key findings and implications of the theory for scholarship and policy. I also describe my plans for project advancement and the policy implications stemming from this argument. In sum, America's alliance network in Asia matters, perhaps now more than ever. The U.S. must understand the limits of its influence in Asia in addressing a rising China. This starts with an evaluation of its Asian alliance network. These allies have histories and interests that differ from the United States (Kang 2003; 2010; Haggard and Kang 2020). These differences matter. The United States cannot force its preferences on its weaker allies in Asia and expect complete compliance. This dynamic is often on display within the context of U.S.-China competition in Asia. The United States must adapt and accept this reality to salvage its grand strategy in Asia. Alliances are no longer black and white, with relatively clear distinctions of who is with the United States and against its enemies. Contemporary alliances are shades of grey; American allies in Asia largely want to

maintain good relations with China and the United States simultaneously. Indeed, many domestic political platforms in Asia are built around this conceptualization of foreign policy (Terry 2022; Cruz De Castro 2023; Grossman 2023). The U.S. must look to the politics and histories of its allies to understand when and why they may push back against American interests. Doing so will not only enable the United States to make more prudent policy decisions in maintaining allied relations but also contribute to a regional order in which American and Chinese influence can peacefully coexist in Asia.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

Given the power disparity between patron and protégé, how can a protégé coerce their patron for greater autonomy? The existing literature focuses primarily on the patron's perspective and assumes the protégé lacks the authority to challenge the patron's interests (Snyder 1991; Beckley 2015; Cha 2016; Yarhi-Milo et al. 2016). But these theories fail to capture the American experience in Asia. A careful read of history shows that allies in Asia are far more than American puppets, they can dictate the interests of the alliance.

My central argument is that weaker allies have agency; they can and do coerce their stronger partner for greater autonomy. International politics is often viewed through the lens of Westphalian great powers, leading to skewed interpretations of historical events and misguided predictions for the future. This theory challenges current wisdom, noting the importance of area expertise and appreciation for context and cultural nuance in generating robust theory. My research builds upon scholars who continue to challenge the conventional wisdom in international relations scholarship, noting that Europe is not a universal case for international politics, and is often a poor proxy for East Asia (Kang 2003; Goh 2013; Kang and Haggard 2020).

This theory is without question regionally motivated. I am interested in patterns of coercion and cooperation in East Asia. Many rightfully assume the United States to play an outsized role in these trends (Yeo 2019). But in doing so, forget the centuries of history between U.S. allies prior to the American entrance in the Pacific (Kang 2003; 2010). This history matters. It informs how allies navigate their institutional arrangements with the United States and how they balance their alliance ties with the

U.S. with other regional actors, including China, North Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and India (Loke 2021; Cha 2011). My theory brings this theme to the forefront. I use these trends to develop a generalizable theory capable of speaking to alliance structures with similar features, including those limited to two allies and defined by hierarchy.

This leads to a counterintuitive theory that proceeds in two parts. First, because the American alliance network in Asia was designed to maximize American control, I theorize conditions under which allies designed to be highly cohesive can disagree (Cha 2016). I consider the independence of a protégé's defense ministry and military from oversight by their patron or rival ministries within the protégé's executive branch. Doing so enables me to theorize a protégé's control over their defense policy and its execution. A protégé with a controlled defense ministry is unlikely to challenge their patron because they are likely to draft policy that reflects the patron's interests. Even if a protégé has an independent military, they are unlikely to challenge their patron because the military is tasked with executing policy from above. Similarly, protégés with both an independent defense ministry and military are unlikely to challenge their patron because they don't need to; they have control over their own defense policy and its execution. They can disregard their patron's objections to pursue their own interests.

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This chapter proceeds as follows. I first outline key assumptions and definitions that inform my theory. I then identify the scope of my argument and transition to describe the shared fate mechanism underlying the theory. I discuss how variance on the independent variables, a protégé's defense independence and a protégé's regime security,

influence their ability to coerce their patron for greater autonomy. I lace historical anecdotes throughout the chapter to give the theory life and to illustrate how this logic operates in international politics. I first provide an overview of prior literature that inform the theory.

Prior Literature

I follow Leeds et al. (2000) in defining a military alliance as a formal agreement among states to cooperate militarily in the face of potential or realized conflict. The argument that alliances are short-lived tools of control for powerful hegemons is an enduring theme in this literature (Mearsheimer 2001; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Walt 2009). Weaker allies are assumed to lack the means to contribute to their stronger ally's defense and are therefore subject to the whims of an oppressive patron (Castillo and Downes 2020). Non-hegemonic states are lumped into amorphous behavioral categories of balancing or bandwagoning across the major theories of alliance politics, including balance of power and capability aggregation (Singer and Small 1968; Levy 1981; Walt 1985). The role of domestic politics is largely overlooked within these models. Morrow (1991; 1993) provides a notable exception in presenting a trade-off model of alliances. Domestic politics is central to this theory as states base their decision to independently arm or ally on domestic costs and benefits (Kimball 2010; Johnson 2015; Kim and Sciubba 2015; Yahri-Milo et al. 2016). I describe these theories in greater detail below.

<u>Models of Alliance Politics</u>

Alliance ties are 'sticky' given the sunk costs associated with formation and military spending (Leeds et al. 2009; Fuhrmann and Sechser 2014; Trager 2015). States may fear entrapment or abandonment by their allies, but these concerns are often

overblown (Narang and Mehta 2019). Prior scholarship generally relies on one of three models to understand the scope and nature of alliance interactions, including coercion. These models are the balancing, capability-aggregation, and trade-off models.

Balancing models posit that states balance (align against an aggressor or 'threat') or bandwagon (align with an aggressor/threat) to survive (Morgenthau 1959; Walt 1985; 1997) in response to systemic imbalance of power. Systemic power distribution is directly linked to state survival, and thus alignment, rather than individual state-level attributes which may (dis)incentivize the pursuit and maintenance of formal alliance ties (Wright 1965; Holsti et al. 1973). Alliances should therefore be nonideological and purely situational; quickly breaking after conflict and 'resetting' in preparation for the next systemic confrontation (Morgenthau 1973; Waltz 1979). In this sense, alliances are relatively costless compared to the price of nonalignment in the face of systemic imbalance (Christensen and Snyder 1990). States coerce prior to alliance formation, as threats can be used by an aggressor to encourage bandwagoning while deterring balancing in favor of a defender and vice versa (Smith 1998; Walt 2009; Gerzhoy 2015).

Capability models similarly follow this logic but diverge in assuming states to consistently balance against an aggressor rather than bandwagon (Deutsch and Singer 1964). In this view, alliances are tools to aggregate state capabilities to advance the common interests of members (Singer and Small 1968). These interests generally extend beyond matters of immediate survival but are similarly static in their assumptions of consistent preference uniformity (i.e., deterring an attack from an opposing state/coalition) following alignment (Wallace 1973). Problems of burden-sharing and free-riding can occur between members and remedied with coercive solutions, but these

solutions are inflicted by the patron (Bennett 1997). Allied disputes are byproducts of a much larger security agenda (i.e., deterrence) despite the plausibility that these spats are representative of divergent allied interests that go beyond a need to survive. Conversely, trade-off models of alliance politics posit the primacy of domestic politics—especially arming decisions—in informing alliance utility (Kim and Sciubba 2015).

Trade-off models assume that states balance the political benefits of additional capabilities against the political costs of acquiring them when choosing between proliferating arms independently and forming alliances (i.e., autonomy vs. alignment) Altfeld 1984; Morrow 1991;1993)). State arming and alignment decisions are interdependent and domestic politics play a central role in influencing the trajectory of decision-making in these realms (Werner and Lemke 1997; Johnson 2015). The external security environment can indeed influence the cost of autonomy vs. alignment, but it does so marginally and primarily during periods of conflict. Allied domestic politics influence day-to-day calculations of utility during periods of relative détente (Kimball 2010). Despite their interest in domestic attributes, trade-off models are limited by focusing primarily on state arming decisions. Allied relations encompass a wide span of issue domains not strictly limited to security (Gibler and Rider 2004; Digiuseppe and Poast 2018). I address this gap with my theory of shared fate between allies, building on scholarship noting the relevance of weaker actors to understanding conflict dyads (Sechser 2010; Womack 2016) I place the protégé's domestic politics at the center of my discussion and next describe key terms and assumptions that underlie the theory.

Key Terms and Assumptions

I focus specifically on defensive alliances, meaning the nature of allied commitments are promises of assistance in case of attack on a partner's sovereignty or territorial integrity (Leeds 2003b; Johnson and Wolford 2022). Defensive alliances are costly; they require one to commit their forces to defend a country prior to attack (Poast 2019; Johnson and Joiner 2021). Alliance treaties are critical in specifying the bounds of allied commitment (Leeds et al. 2000; Leeds 2003a; Gibler and Rider 2004; Lee 2022).

I theorize about defensive alliances that are both bilateral and asymmetric. Bilateral alliances are those between two allies that are distinct from larger alliance systems with 3+ members (Snyder 1984). Asymmetry refers to the distribution of military capability across states within an alliance (Morrow 1991). Asymmetric alliances are those defined by hierarchy; one ally, a patron, is disproportionately stronger than its peer, or protégé (Blankenship 2020). Symmetry indicates relative equality in capability distribution across allies (Morrow 1991).[5] Bilateral asymmetric alliances merit a trade-off between autonomy and security.

Prior scholarship overwhelmingly favors the viewpoint of the patron but acknowledges protégés as agents of the patron's bidding (Snyder 1991; Walt 1990; Smith 1995; Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002; Capie 2003; Christensen 2011; Beckley 2015; Cha 2016; Yarhi-Milo et al. 2016; McManus and Yarhi-Milo 2017). A protégé may refuse to act on the patron's demands or choose to pursue partnerships outside the umbrella of their alliance (Bas and Schub 2016; Kuo 2019). This reduces the protégé's reliance on—and

[5] My definition is loosely based on Morrow (1991). Morrow focuses on the outcome of power difference between allies. I instead rely on the difference in military capabilities between allies implied in his analysis. References of capability distribution further imply what allies can contribute to an alliance and what they seek through membership (Holsti 1970).

supposed obligation to—act according to the patron's interests (Haas and Yahri-Milo 2020). Indeed, these findings point to the agency of the protégé. I therefore define the terms autonomy and security to reflect their experience by a protégé.

Autonomy

Autonomy is a state's control over its own affairs—particularly its domestic politics (Schweller 2004). In agreement with prior work, I place emphasis on looking within the state to understand its use of alliance ties (Snyder 1991; Zakaria 1992; Christensen 1997; Leeds et al. 2000).[6] Allied experiences following alignment are very different between patron and protégé (Vine 2019). A patron is unlikely to host weapons or foreign military bases affiliated with its protégé (Cooley 2012; Blankenship and Lin-Greenberg 2022). Its citizens will not experience the negative externalities from foreign troop presence such as environmental degradation, land confiscation, prostitution, and abuse (Moon 1997; Yeo 2011). The most salient aspects of an alliance within the patron's domestic politics are primarily those of burden sharing—wanting protégés to take greater charge of their own defense (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966; Sandler 1993; Oma 2012; Haesebrouck 2017; Blankenship 2021).

This logic changes when considering the protégé's perspective. Alliance ties are hot button issues within a protégé's domestic politics and are intimately experienced by all levels of its society (Cooley and Nexton 2013; Kawato 2015). Politicians use alliance ties for a variety of ends—such as scapegoats for their own political failures or to quash civil unrest (Yeo 2010; 2018). A protégé's military may be required to submit to a

[6] When viewed strictly from a patron's perspective, alliances are tools to enhance their own power (Walt 1990; Snyder 2007; Kuo 2021). Alliances enable patrons to project power abroad, removing them from the day-to-day priorities of its citizens and political elite (Lake 1996).

patron's military authority through force integration (Schmitt 2019). Agreements pertaining to the rights of foreign military forces often favor the stronger patron over the hosting protégé.[7] Protégés cede autonomy to their patron, and accept these burdens, to gain security (Morrow 1991).

Security

I define security simply as state survival.[8] A military alliance with a more powerful patron may be the difference between life and death for a protégé (Morrow 2000; Cha 2016). Patrons can export force by sending troops and weapons to an ally.[9] The patron may suffer a strategic loss should the alliance fail, but this is unlikely to affect the fundamental survival of the state (Leeds and Savun 2007).

In contrast, protégés are likely to find themselves in a more precarious security position at the time of alliance formation (Kim and Woods 2022).[10] Internal rivalries within the protégé can pose a significant threat to its survival (Singh 2014). While a patron may experience its own domestic problems, its status as patron rests on its ability to provide its protégé with security (Klein 2010). To grant security, a patron must first be able to secure itself at home. The trade-off between autonomy and security is an uneasy

[7] For example, civilian abuse or occupational negligence perpetrated by the patron's own military may not be eligible for prosecution in the protégé's courts (Yeo 2011). Public backlash over this injustice can have dramatic effects on the domestic politics of the protégé—from grassroots protests to changes in its electoral makeup (Kim and Boas 2020).

[8] Morrow (1991) defines security as a state's "ability to maintain the current resolution of the issues that it wishes to preserve" (908). This is a high bar for security. Protégés may be unable to attain goals of security beyond that of survival. I therefore deviate from more complex definitions of security because I am interested in the perspective of the protégé rather than the patron.

[9] While these actions may antagonize others—especially the protégé's neighbors—the patron is unlikely to face immediate threats to its homeland as a direct consequence of this support (Gerzhoy 2015).

[10] The nature and origin of threats to its security are wider than those experienced by the patron (Christensen 2011; Cha 2016). Internal political rivalries can lead to complicated situations of division that are not wholly foreign or domestic—such as Taiwan's relationship with China or the division between North and South Korea (Kang 2003). These disputes are personal; they center on flashpoints of culture, identity, and heritage (Kang 2010).

one; allies often disagree on how this exchange should operate in practice. Coercion is what makes these relationships work. I develop a theory of shared fate to describe patterns of coercion within bilateral asymmetric alliances.

Theory of Shared Fate

Dependent Variable: Coercion

I define coercion as threatening violence to get an actor to behave in ways they would not otherwise (Schelling 1966; Jervis 1978; Schultz 2001; Powell 2002; Lake 2011). Implicit in this definition is the distinction between the actual use and threat of violence. Threatening violence does not require one to act on it. Indeed, coercion is most successful when the violence threatened is held in reserve (Schelling 1966; Clark 1989; Ikenberry 2015). States use their capacity for violence as bargaining power (Ikenberry and Kupchan 2009; Hafner-Burton et al. 2009). My interest in coercion to understand allied relations may seem counterproductive because alliances are seemingly created to facilitate cooperation between two actors who share similar interests (Leeds and Anac 2005).

But this is not true; alliances are imperfect unions. While allied interests may share some overlap, disputes over the ranking of these interests, and the means through which those interests are achieved, can leave much to be desired. One may wonder the line between coercion and persuasion; arguing that a protégé may be incapable of coercing their patron due to the power disparity between them (Schneider 2021). For example, a protégé may try to persuade a patron to change their behavior because it is unable to credibly threaten the violence needed to coerce.

This logic fails in two respects. First is definitional. Both persuasion and coercion are used to facilitate cooperation by influencing a target's decision-making but differ in how influence is exerted (Reardon 1991; Krebs et al. 2007). Coercion involves backing a target into a corner. An actor coercing another will acknowledge that the target can choose to behave in a way not in line with the coercer's interests (Lake 1996; Henke 2019). But doing so has consequences; the coercer can punish the target by harming the target's interests. The coercer's goal is to momentarily change the target's incentive structure by threatening to harm something the target cares about—like the target's security, economy, and broader strategic interests (Drezner 2003; Horowitz et al. 2018). A target that gives into the coercer's demands knows it would not do so on its own volition (Weigand 2011). Rather, the coercer's threat of harm is driving the target's behavior (Sechser and Fuhrmann 2017).

Persuasion is different. A target does not give into a persuader's demands; it agrees with them (Finnemore 1996; Johnson 2008). A persuader seeks to alter the target's behavior by appealing to the target's self-interest (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Persuasion relies on the target's understanding that doing what the persuader says will be better for its own interests (Mutz et al. 1996; Risse 2000). A persuader will not threaten nor hold the target's interests hostage; the target changes its behavior because the target accepts the persuader's argument as valid (Johnson 2001; Finnemore 2003). The persuader may alter its behavior to encourage change in the target, but the target must decide to change because it wants to—not because the persuader says so (Checkel 2001; Balzacq 2005).

Second, assuming a protégé can only persuade rather than coerce their patron fails to capture the vantage of the protégé. Patrons care about their protégé's survival because they understand the protégé's wellbeing as an extension of their own (Leeds et al. 2000; Morrow 2000; Leeds 2003a; Leeds 2003b; Fuhrman and Sechser 2014; LeVeck and Narang 2017; Narang and Mehta 2019). Protégés use their patron's vested interest in their affairs to coerce. I next describe the shared fate between allies that makes this possible.

The Mechanism: Shared Fate

Contrary to current wisdom, I argue that protégés have agency; they can and do coerce their stronger patron to grant them greater autonomy. This starts with a reevaluation of what a protégé wants from alliance membership—which is fundamentally different from their motivation in forming an alliance. Patrons form an alliance with a weaker protégé in exchange for control over the protégé's affairs. Protégés grant patrons this control to get the security it could not provide for itself through alignment. However, a key point stemming from this logic that is often overlooked is the period of analysis. This trade-off operates differently before and after alliance formation.

Before alliance formation, patrons have the greatest amount of leverage over their protégé at any point in their relationship because they can dangle the promise of an alliance treaty in exchange for the protégé's compliance. Protégés comply with their patron's demands because they are unable to provide the security an alliance treaty grants for themselves. This incentive structure changes following alliance formation because allies have a shared fate. I define shared fate as an institutional tie between two actors

that commits one's honor, obligation, and reputation to the preservation of that institution. [11]

Shared fate can make it difficult for patrons to coerce because the protégé is granted a blanket level of security through an alliance treaty. It is difficult for patrons to walk away from these ties for a host of reasons, including concerns of reputation, credibility, and the stickiness of alliance ties (Gibler 2008; Leeds et al. 2009). Protégés are conscious of this and update their interests from immediate concerns of security to desires for greater autonomy. Protégés have a wide array of tools available to influence their patron—including attempts at persuasion, empty threats, incentives like granting the patron even greater control over the protégé's affairs or complying with a patron's demands in other domains beyond security. These tools generally less costly for the protégé compared to coercion; they don't require the protégé to credibly threaten harm to the patron's interests. Doing so is risky—the patron may cut its losses and abandon the protégé all together. Coercion requires that the protégé threaten something cares about—like its economic and broader strategic interests. Environmental circumstances such as great power competition can exacerbate these threats. I focus specifically on coercion because it is costly and often counters the purpose of alliance ties: to facilitate cooperation between allied parties (Leeds et al. 2000; Leeds et al. 2009).

This aspiration is an enduring theme in international politics—regardless of if conceptualized through a European Westphalian or Asian Tributary lens (Lake 2003; Haggard and Kang 2020). Indeed, coercion is often not an ideal strategy for a protégé

[11] While this definition is also applicable to multilateral institutions, I focus specifically on bilateral military alliances.

given the risk of a patron's retaliation or even their disinterest. Consider this logic at work within the Sino-Soviet alliance following the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.

In addition to pressuring Mao to pursue peace talks with the Americans, Khrushchev reprimanded Chinese leadership over its captivity of American citizens and its actions toward Taiwan.

> **Khrushchev:** I didn't even know that the PRC holds five Americans in captivity. Is this true? In the conversation with Eisenhower I only said that, as a matter of friendly advice, I could touch on the question in Beijing.
>
> **Enlai:**[12] …All of them [American captives] are spies, and, according to the Chinese law, they are subject to imprisonment. We believe that we, Chinese, let too many Americans go.
>
> **Khrushchev:** This is the first time I am hearing about this. But if you want my opinion, we, if we were you, would have acted differently. The Americans who are imprisoned in the PRC should, if you do not take the course of confrontation, either be expelled or traded for counterparts…In a word, in our opinion, the Americans that you hold in prison should better be set free.
>
> **Mao:** *(with obvious displeasure and testily)*[13] Of course, one can set them free or not, and we will not release Americans now but we will do it at a more appropriate time.
>
> **Khrushchev:** …your attitude and the fact that you probably took offense at us complicates the exchange of opinions… If I touched on this issue, I did it only because I wanted to sort it out and to lay before you our point of view, since this issue stirs up the international situation.
>
> **Mao:** That means it complicates life for the Americans.
>
> **Khrushchev:** This issue also complicates our life.
>
> **Mao:** …I would like to clarify right away that we did not intend to undertake any large-scale military actions in the area of Taiwan, and only wanted to create complications for the United States considering that they got bogged down in Lebanon. And we believe our campaign was successful.
>
> **Khrushchev:** We hold a different opinion on this question (Discussion between Khrushchev and Mao 1959).

[12] Zhou Enlai, Premier of China, and Mao's subordinate.
[13] Emphasis from original text.

This conversation is a far cry from a protégé kowtowing before its patron. China had the Soviet Union on the hook, and both took the heat for Mao's intransigence. While Khrushchev disagreed with Mao's decisions, the Soviet Union would nonetheless be perceived as a supporter of—if not responsible for—China's actions by virtue of their alliance. Allies have a shared fate; the actions of one taken in isolation, for better or worse, influence the other ally. Shared fate is a powerful component of alliance politics. It alters what proteges want from alliance membership and it is because of this shared fate that protégés have agency.

Independent Variables: The Protégé's Domestic Politics

It is tempting to overweight a patron's coercive might and underestimate a protégé's resourcefulness given the power disparity between them. But, as noted above, protégés are conscious of this disparity. Rather than threatening to entrap their patron in international conflict (Beckley 2015; Narang and Mehta 2019), protégés leverage their own domestic politics. Patrons seek control over a protégé's internal and external affairs (Cha 2016; Izumikawa 2020). When it comes to their domestic politics, protégés have a home team advantage; they have information their patrons don't. They have deep knowledge of leadership networks and factions, interests of the local population, and the state's relationship with regional actors. More specifically, a protégé knows how far it will go to achieve its aims; the patron does not.

Consider again the Sino-Soviet alliance following the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. Mao rejected any attempt for Soviet oversight in China's relations with Taiwan, or what China deemed to be a purely domestic issue, provoking the following outburst from Khrushchev:

> "You always refuse to work out a policy on this question that we can understand. You might think that we interfere in your internal affairs, but we only express our considerations. In this regard, I would remark that we do not know what policy you will have on this issue tomorrow… the problem is that not only does the world public opinion not know what you might undertake tomorrow, but also we, your allies do not know" (Discussion between Khrushchev and Mao 1959).

Despite its advantage in military capability, the Soviet Union was often at a loss in navigating Chinese domestic politics (Li 2011). A protégé can use this to their advantage.

However, the extent to which a protégé can leverage shared fate to coerce their patron varies. I isolate two independent variables to explain this variance, including the protégé's 1) defense independence and 2) regime security. This section proceeds in two parts. First, coercion cannot take place without allied disagreement (Gerzhoy 2015). Bilateral asymmetric alliances are designed to reflect the patron's interests at the expense of the protégé's (Christensen 2011; Cha 2016). Protégés that lack the authority to challenge their patron, meaning they lack defense independence, cannot coerce. I therefore first identify conditions under which allies designed to be highly cohesive can disagree. Second, I use conditions of allied disagreement to theorize the ability of a protégé to coerce their patron, focusing on regime security. Insecure protégés can threaten their own collapse to coerce their patron to give into their demands; secure protégés cannot. I expand on this logic below, first considering a protégé's defense independence.

Defense Independence

I capture a protégé's defense independence in two ways. I first review the institutional makeup of the protégé's defense ministry to capture its authority over defense policy; conceptualizing a defense ministry to be controlled or independent. A controlled defense ministry is one under the authority of the patron or other institutions

within the protégé's executive branch. Independent defense ministries are those that lack these constraints. I then examine the protégé's military, being controlled or independent, to consider the extent of the protégé's authority to execute defense policy. A controlled military is one subject to a patron's command. Protégés with independent militaries lack this oversight.

Rather than looking at each component in isolation, I am interested in their interaction. It is impossible to understand the influence of one without the other, nor does it reflect reality. Rarely will a state allow its military to run unchecked (Huntington 1957; Feaver 1999; White 2017).[14] Similarly, defense ministries are tasked with policy creation (Nielsen and Snider 2009). These policies are mute unless there is an entity capable of carrying them out (Kemp and Hudlin 1992). Defense ministries and militaries work together to design and execute policy (Colton 1979; Ben-Meir 1995). States are unlikely to have one without the other (Huntington 1968; Svolik 2012). I therefore consider the interaction of a protégé's defense ministry and military to predict the likelihood of allied disagreement. I outline this logic in Figure 1 and describe it further below.

[14] Granting the military control over foreign policy has led to historically poor outcomes. For example, many cite the military's independence in Germany and Japan during the 1930s and 1940s as reasons for their expansive aims and inclination for wars they could not win (Hotta 2013; Stargardt 2015).

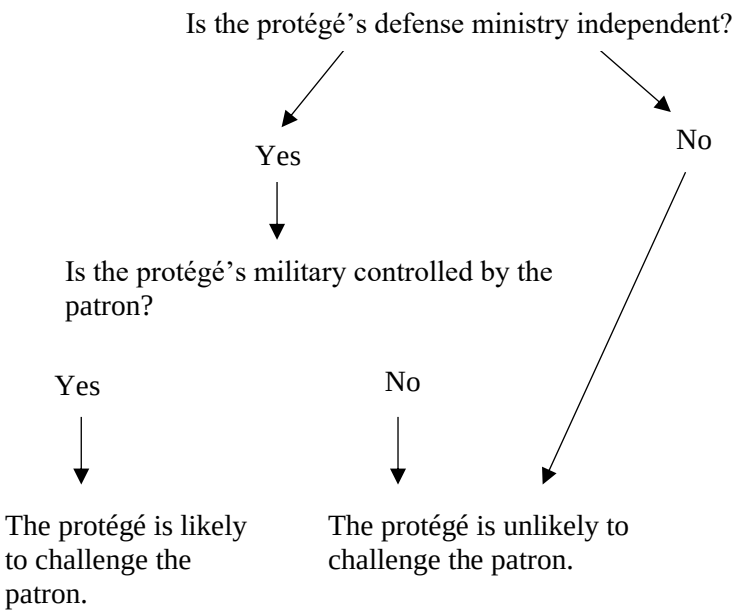
Is the protégé's defense ministry independent?
Yes
No
Is the protégé's military controlled by the patron?
Yes
No
The protégé is likely to challenge the patron.
The protégé is unlikely to challenge the patron.

Figure 1: Defense Autonomy

Defense Independence: Ministry

A defense ministry is an institution within the executive branch in charge of protecting the state from harm (Brooks 2017). A defense ministry drafts security policy and oversees entities tasked with policy execution, like the military (Albrecht and Ohl 2016).[15] State protection has both internal and external implications. States vary in the extent to which they grant their defense ministries purview over domestic versus international affairs (Croissant et al. 2013; Greitens 2016). Defense ministers lead these institutions. They are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the state's chief executive (Perlmutter and LeoGrande 1982; Feaver 2003). An independent defense ministry is one that is only subject to the chief executive's authority. It is not checked by other state ministries nor subject to the patron's control.

[15] Defense ministries are not isolated to democratic governments and can be found across a host of regime types (Croissant 2010).

Bureaucratic and military decision-making is led from the top-down (Downs 1966; Pion-Berlin 2010). An independent defense ministry grants protégés relative autonomy over their defense policy and puts it on a more equal footing with its domestic and international counterparts (Bruneau and Tollefson 2006; Lupton 2017). Domestically, an independent ministry is given greater latitude to pursue its interests outside the purview of rival ministries (Kalicki 2019). Internationally, an independent defense ministry is not subject to the patron's jurisdiction and is therefore able to pursue policies against the patron's interests (Brooks 2008).[16]

Defense Autonomy: Military

However, the presence of an independent defense ministry alone does not mean a protégé is more likely to challenge their patron. I therefore consider the independence of the protégé's military, or the organization of a state's armed forces (Huntington 1957; Stephan 1988). A protégé's military is independent if it is not subject to the patron's command (Marinov and Goemans 2014). Protégés with independent militaries are given greater purview in carrying out the directives of their defense ministry. They are not required to submit their military to the authority of, nor integrate with, the patron's military like those with controlled militaries (Stacher 2012). A protégé's decision to integrate their military with their patron's may not be their own. A patron who fears reckless behavior by their protégé may stipulate the protégé's subservience to the patron's command in their alliance treaty (Cha 2016). A patron may even revoke the

[16] One may argue that is not the independence of the protégé's defense ministry that matters, but rather the extent to which the defense ministry favors civilian versus military control. A rich body of literature explores this dynamic in addition to regime type (Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1977; Debs and Goemans 2010; Svolik 2013; Geddes et al. 2014). While useful, only relying on the civilian versus military distinction does not allow for the exploration of the extent to which the protégé's defense ministry and military is under the patron's control. I therefore focus on defense independence.

protégé's right to maintain a military altogether and instead task themself with the protégé's defense (Kapur 2018)

Allowing a patron to take responsibility for one's defense frees the protégé to use resources that would be allocated for defense for other purposes, including economic development and social welfare (Dower 2000). Depending on the extent to which the patron controls the protégé's defense, the ability of the protégé to challenge their patron varies. Protégés with an independent defense ministry can set their policy agenda without oversight by the patron or rival state ministries. Military and foreign policy decision-making is led from the top-down (Huntington 1957; Lee 2014). Protégés with independent defense ministries have greater ability to challenge their patron. Nevertheless, just because a protégé has greater ability to challenge their patron does not mean they will.

The independence of the protégé's military therefore plays an important role. Protégés with a controlled military are subservient to their patron in the execution of defense policy. This can be problematic for protégés with independent defense ministries. An independent defense ministry allows protégés to make policies not in line with their patron's (Feaver 1999; Brooks 2019). This creates friction as these policies trickle down to be executed by the protégé's military—who is responsible to the patron's command. I therefore hypothesize:

> *H1: Protégés with an independent defense ministry but a controlled military are more likely to challenge their patron.*

Protégés with independent defense ministries but controlled militaries are likely to be regarded as troublesome or reckless allies by their patron. This is not because these

protégés are inherently unruly, but because they can dictate defense policies that may be contrary to the patron's interests.

Now consider this logic in reverse. Protégés with controlled defense ministries have less agency and are thus more likely to draft policies that align with the patron's interests. The protégé's military is then tasked with executing this policy. Even if the protégé has an independent military, they are unlikely to challenge the patron because the military is tasked with executing policy from above. This leads to my second hypothesis:

> *H2: Protégés with a controlled defense ministry and independent military are less likely to challenge their patron.*

Protégés that have controlled defense ministries, but an independent military are likely to be seen as ideal allies by the patron because they are more likely to be subservient to the patron's interests. They are likely to pursue a policy agenda that aligns with the patron's and execute this agenda in a similar fashion. A protégé's execution of this agenda can range from taking greater responsibility for their defense to relegating their military's authority beneath that of their patron's. As noted above, protégés are often in precarious security positions at the time of alliance formation. Their ability to contest these terms may be inconceivable and perhaps undesirable (Dower 2000). This leads to an interesting trade-off in terms of the protégé's ability to coerce their patron for greater autonomy.[17]

[17] One may think that a protégé with an independent defense ministry and military is more likely to challenge their patron because they have complete autonomy over their defense policy and its execution. I argue that it is because of this autonomy that protégés with independent defense ministries and militaries are unlikely to challenge their patron; they don't need to. These protégés can create and implement defense policy that may run counter to the patron's interests. While this may be upsetting to their patron, these protégés have greater agency to make their own decisions without the patron's oversight.

Regime Security

An alliance with a powerful patron can grant legitimacy to an ineffective or disliked regime through financial and military resources (Linz and Stephan 1978). A protégé's regime security is therefore an important predictor of its ability to coerce. I define regime security as the protection of the ruling elite from violent political change (Thompson 1975; Jackson 2007). An insecure regime, being one that lacks this protection, seeks support from a patron to ensure their survival. These stakes are high and a protégé may sacrifice much of their defense independence to the patron to gain security through alliance formation (Morrow 1991; Cha 2016). While an insecure protégé may initially accept this trade-off as necessary, their desire for autonomy can endure after signing the alliance treaty. I outline this logic in Figure 2, describing it further below.

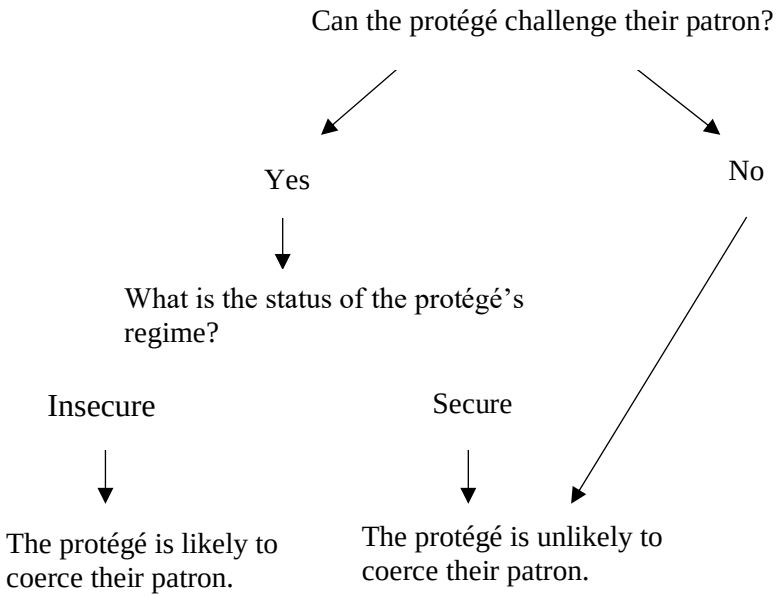
Can the protégé challenge their patron?
Yes
No
What is the status of the protégé's regime?
Insecure
Secure
The protégé is likely to coerce their patron.
The protégé is unlikely to coerce their patron.

Figure 2: Protégé's Ability to Coerce

This creates a problem for the patron. The patron incurs sunk costs as it continues to pour resources into the protégé's defense, including troops, bases, and weapons (Cooley 2008). As a patron contributes more resources to their protégé's defense, they

have more skin in the game. Allies have a shared fate. By signing their alliance treaty, they created an institutional tie that commits their honor, obligation, and reputation to the preservation of that alliance. A protégé can leverage this shared fate to coerce their patron for greater autonomy. But doing so is risky; the patron may resist or offer half-hearted concessions that fail to address the entirety of the protégé's demands.

Protégés are therefore strategic in their decision to coerce their patron. This decision is a function of two principles. First, protégés factor in their ability to challenge the patron's interests. Protégés unable to challenge their patron are unlikely to coerce because they don't need to; their defense institutions are designed to reflect the patron's interests. Second, and for allies who can challenge their patron, regime security is a key predictor in their ability to coerce. Insecure protégés can coerce their patron to give into their demands by threatening their own political and economic ruin. The shared fate between allies makes these threats credible.

A patron may try to coerce the protégé by threatening to withhold military and financial assets from the protégé's regime (Roehrig 2017). The patron may go so far as to threaten abandonment should the protégé refuse to acquiesce (Cha 2000). Protégés counter these threats by leveraging their shared fate with the patron; by letting the regime fall, the patron risks the protégé's collapse. Alliance ties are hard to walk away from, and even if a patron is willing to let its protégé fall, a failed state is likely to prove far more untenable for the patron's security (Krasner 2003). Patrons face a dilemma; either having to make significant concessions to their protégé or risk its collapse. This logic leads to my third hypothesis:

> *H3: As a protégé's regime security decreases, their ability to coerce their patron for greater autonomy increases.*

The patron's ambassadors, military personnel, and economic advisors located within the protégé give these threats further credence. These actors experiencing the regime's instability on the ground may further prompt the patron to acquiesce.

This dynamic changes as the protégé's regime becomes more secure. Secure protégés are less likely to leverage shared fate to coerce their patron; they don't need to. Secure regimes have greater latitude to maneuver in terms of foreign and domestic policy (Jackson 2007; McMahon et al. 2015). For example, a secure protégé may be able to justify excess spending for military modernization efforts initially rejected by their patron (Bowers and Hiim 2020; Pempel 2021). They do not need to go through the hassle of coercing a resistant patron when they are able to stake greater claims of autonomy and endure threats of punishment by the patron.

This logic counters much of the conventional wisdom dismissing the agency of weaker allies. One may therefore be skeptical of the protégé's ability to credibly threaten regime collapse along with the patron's willingness to believe it. Threatening regime collapse is a tough lie to get away with, and both patrons and protégés know this (Smith 2005; Gibler 2010). It is because credibly threatening regime collapse is so hard to do that patrons buy into it when their protégé does threaten it. While a protégé is likely to care more about their own security than their patron, the patron's interest is not zero. The shared fate between allies forces the patron to care; failing to do so would be throwing away the time, money, and human capital they have, and continue to, contribute to the protégé's defense (Nexon and Wright 2007). Patrons may threaten abandonment, but they care about the wellbeing of their protégé and have an interest to listen when their protégé threatens collapse (Green 2017).

Consider the protégé's perspective. Protégés threatening regime collapse to coerce their patron use this as a last-ditch effort. This is not a desirable strategy; protégés threaten their own ruin when they run out of options. This is also why secure regimes do not need to coerce their patron; they have the political capital to manage their own affairs. A secure protégé can justify going without resources their patron may provide for their defense should they find the patron's terms intolerable. Insecure protégés cannot.

Regime threats can be both internal to the state and external (Fravel 2011; Koblentz 2013). Insecure regimes are intimately aware of these threats because they are forced to navigate them daily. Indeed, protégés have a home team advantage. They have the insider information their patron lacks. Regime threats are credible when a protégé does not have to lie about them—they are visible to both the patron and protégé (Fravel 2005). However, the patron's knowledge of these threats is likely only skin deep; they lack knowledge of patronage networks and the regime's ability to protect against foreign and domestic threats (Geddes et al. 2014; Meng 2022). The protégé can thus bend the truth if needed; demanding the patron give into their demands or suffer the consequences. These consequences range from having to deal with a new regime more hostile to the patron's interests, to the complete collapse and forfeit of the protégé to a patron's opponent (Gaddis 2005; Cha 2016). It is the shared fate between allies that forces the patron's hand, and thereby enables a protégé to coerce their patron for greater autonomy.

Conclusion

This theory reveals an important and understudied trend in alliance politics; protégés can and do coerce their patrons for greater autonomy. Evidence from the historical record supports this argument. Consider again the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.

American officials were highly concerned over the hold Taiwan, a U.S. ally, had on American foreign policy (Cha 2016). Both President Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs were "of the opinion that the Islands have no strategic value,' but that failure of the U.S. government to support Taiwan could "precipitate a do or die GRC [Taiwanese] attack against the [Chinese] mainland" (FRUS Aug. 20, 1958; Aug. 15, 1958). Taiwanese President Chiang Kai Shek personally wrote to Eisenhower that Taiwan's collapse "would be more dangerous than an all out military attack" (FRUS Aug. 27, 1958). Although American officials perceived Chiang as "portraying the situation in exaggerated terms," they feared that Taiwanese forces may begin bombing mainland China "even in the face of explicit U.S. objections" (FRUS Aug. 26, 1958; Aug. 27, 1958). The U.S. gave in because did not know how far Chiang would go to reunify Taiwan with mainland China (Sheng 2008). The United States provided robust military assistance to Taiwan while attempting to distance itself from immediate retribution (Huai 2019).

Indeed, patrons may lull themselves into a false sense of security, believing their own ingenuity, or their partner's lack of, will protect them from blowback. I show this problem is most acute for patrons who believe their overwhelming strength grants them immunity from their protégé's attempts at coercion. Rather than dismissing the perspective of weaker allies, I place them at the center of my theory. Bilateral asymmetric alliances cannot exist without a protégé's membership. These protégés can have interests, identities, and histories that differ from that of their patron. As described above, these differences matter in predicting how and why a protégé may choose to coerce their patron for greater autonomy. I next describe the research design used to test this theory.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

I test the theory with a a series of case studies of the U.S.-South Korea and U.S.-Japan alliances to examine allied disputes and the nature through which—or not—these disputes were solved. Case work enables me to unpack the often-nuanced expression of allied disagreement and coercion dynamics that do not fit neatly into discrete observations. I describe these design choices further below and describe why they are the best test of my theory.

Qualitative Methods:

I test the theory with a series of case studies on defensive alliances defined by clear hierarchy; the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliances. I track the often-nuanced expression and direction of coercion within these cases. Coercion is a challenging concept to measure for several reasons. First relates to its expression. Coercion can operate through many channels simultaneously as an actor attempts to force its preference on its target (Greenhill and Krause 2018). It is therefore challenging to condense these patterns—or lack thereof—into standardized discrete observations for cross-sectional analysis (Drezner 2003). Second, relates to the relationship in question. Coercion can be inflicted in varying degrees, ranging from extremely subtle and indirect gestures to blatant and observable threats of punishment (Hurd 1999). Without understanding the relationship—in this case alliance ties—it can be difficult to understand rhetoric and behaviors that deviate from standard patterns of interaction. One may miss or overstate an actor's attempt at coercion by not understanding the actors themselves and the nature of their relationship with one another (Wendt 1999).

Third, reputation and credibility matter in alliance politics (Morrow 1993; Fearon 1997; Leeds 2003b; Horowitz et al. 2018; Johnson and Joiner 2021). No patron would willingly admit that they were coerced by a weaker protégé they originally intended to control. Doing so would be costly both to its status in the alliance relationship and its position in the international system (Leeds et al. 2000). Protégés could become more blatant in pushing back against their patron if they admit the protégé's success (Slantchev 2005). The patron's adversaries may view the patron's admittance of coercion by its protégé as a sign of weakness in the credibility of the alliance and the patron's resolve in general (Fuhrmann and Sechser 2014; Narang and Mehta 2019). However, there is also good reason to believe the protégé may be hesitant to make public its ability to coerce its patron. In addition to fearing a patron's retaliation, the protégé's adversaries may also perceive a weakness in the credibility of the alliance and attempt to exploit it through crisis initiation (Johnson and Wolford 2023).

These reasons combined impress the importance of case work. I carefully lay out both the history and institutional arrangements surrounding alliance relations. Doing so enables me to identify actor preferences in addition to the 'rules' of their relations. Both alliances I explore are highly institutionalized, with varying levers of American control (Cha 2016). I use process-tracing to track how a protégé navigates these constraints along with how and why they may decide to challenge and ultimately coerce their patron. I do this by analyzing discrete events over the course of allied relations (King et al. 2021). By focusing on these events, I can hold the environment relatively constant (Ritchie et al. 2013). I then analyze the nature and trajectory of allied interactions and their related

behaviors. I identify indicators of coercion that are unique to the event in question and relate them back to the underlying institutional structure of the alliance.

Case Studies: The U.S.-South Korea and U.S.-Japan Alliances

Both the South Korean and Japanese cases are ideal for testing for several reasons. First, both alliances were at their start, and remain, hierarchical favoring the United States (Cha 2016). This enables me to consider coercion dynamics strictly within bilateral asymmetric alliances. Second, both cases feature over seventy years of uninterrupted allied relations—allowing for an expanded timeframe for episode selection (Deguchi 2020; Lee 2023). Third, both South Korea and Japan experienced rapid periods of economic, political, and social growth since the start of their alliances with the United States (Pempel 2021). I isolate the role of political growth—specifically relating to regime security—which is influenced by social and economic factors (Møller 2017). I rely on data from *Varieties of Democracy* (V-dem), isolating their regime opposition group size variable (Coppedge et al. 2023). I follow V-Dem in defining a regime as a set of formal and/or informal rules of an individual or group achieving and maintaining power. This variable was coded by country experts and reflects the share of the state's adult population that are credible opposition to the regime. It does not reflect opposition to a ruling party in a democracy but rather the opposition to the regime in general and want to see it removed.

Expert responses were coded on an ordinal scale ranging from zero to four; zero being less than 1% of the population posing a credible challenge to the regime and four being more than 30% posing a credible challenge. This measure was then converted to an interval scale through a Bayesian estimation model (Coppedge et al. 2023). I use the

interval scale to plot South Korea and Japan's regime opposition group size from the start of their alliances with the United States to 2022. One may nonetheless be skeptical of this measurement. I therefore provide a thorough justification for my use of this variable along with its merits and limitations.

One of the most important merits of this measure is that it allows for between group comparison across a significant period of time on a singular, standardized scale. It is difficult to find a scale of regime security with these attributes. Those that do exist are primarily those that focus exclusively on the extent to which a regime is autocratic or democratic (Cheibub et al. 2010; Geddes et al. 2014; Marshall and Marshall 2017). I avoid measurements of regime type for two reasons. First, the line between autocracy and democracy is messy and not easily identified (Bogaards 2012; Luhrmann et al. 2018). A state may be democratic in name but not in practice or feature attributes of both democratic and autocratic states simultaneously. Second, regime security is not limited to democracies; both democracies and autocracies can be insecure (Bennett 2006; Vreeland 2008). In fact, many autocratic regimes are relatively secure compared to their democratic counterparts and feature robust institutions that preserve their authority (Gandhi 2010; Knutsen and Rasmussen 2018). I therefore look beyond regime type to consider the extent to which a regime—regardless of if democratic or autocratic—is secure.

One may also wonder why I chose regime opposition group size as a proxy for regime security over measures of allied fears of abandonment, military aid, economic capacity, and democratization featured in other, related studies (Gibler and Wolford 2006; Long and Leeds 2006; Benson and Clinton 2016). I describe my reasoning for each

in turn. First, I am interested in a protégé's domestic politics. Prior work overwhelmingly uses allied fears of abandonment to tout the patron's influence (Snyder 1984; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Cha 2000; Gerzhoy 2015). By relying on regime opposition group size, I show that a patron's alleged scope of influence is often overstated in bilateral asymmetric alliances.

State economic capacity is somewhat related to regime opposition group size (Jervis 1982; Fravel 2011). However, the regime opposition group size variable does not indicate a source of a group's dissatisfaction with a regime, only that they are dissatisfied. By choosing a variable that captures dissatisfaction without discriminating its origin, I can paint a more comprehensive picture of regime security. Military aid is similarly tricky—the amount and reliability of this data available to the public is questionable (Neuman 1995). For example, much of the data surrounding the amount and type of weapons at various U.S. bases in Asia is not publicly available (Cooley 2012). Military aid distributed from a patron to its protégé may also be publicly reported as something else or pulled from a fund that lacks reporting requirements (Setzekorn 2017).

One may also wonder why I did not use a measure of public opinion or election outcomes. The integrity of elections for these cases—particularly South Korea—during the period of examination are questionable (Han 1988). Reliable metrics of public opinion are similarly challenging to come by (Kim and Vogel 2011). I therefore rely on a regime's opposition group size to consider the extent to which a regime's authority is contested and credibly threatened as a proxy for regime security.

While an ideal metric for this initial study, using regime opposition group size as a proxy for regime security also has limitations. First, this measure alone can only tell so

much. One needs to look at the regime itself to consider how it understands its own security. Post hoc, it may be easy to say a regime was relatively secure during a period of time even if the regime itself did not feel secure. Similarly, this is only a metric of domestic insecurity. I place emphasis on a protégé's domestic politics to understand their need for and likelihood of coercing their patron. However, domestic politics can be influenced by international events (Snyder 1991). I am therefore cautious in my interpretation of results—weighting the extent to which a protégé leverages its internal politics versus external events.[18] I next move to a case study on the U.S.-ROK alliance to unpack this nuance in further detail.

[18] It is important to note that both North and South Korea view their conflict with one another to be domestic problems (Hough and Bell 2020). Indeed, both constitutions assert authority over the entirety of the Korean Peninsula (Kim 2016). I therefore consider South Korea's reference of North Korea to be a domestic rather than an international issue.

CHAPTER 4: THE U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE

The U.S.-ROK alliance demonstrates the agency granted to a protégé and is ideal for testing hypotheses 1 and 3. The defense autonomy granted to South Korea in terms of defense policy enables it to dictate interests contrary to the United States; however, the South Korean military remains under the control of the United States. This creates friction as ROK defense policies trickle down to be executed by its military. These conditions provide South Korea with opportunities to coerce the United States for greater autonomy. But this is not a new trend in their relations; South Korea has long had the ability to pressure the United States. South Korea's decision to coerce the United States that varies over time. South Korea was rife with domestic instability early into its statehood that undermined its economic and political advancement (Chun 2007). The United States believed this instability would further add to its own coercive might, enabling it to threaten to withhold vital military and economic aid prolonging often-destitute ROK regimes (Kim 2017).

But this goal was shortsighted. I show that insecure South Korean regimes leveraged their own vulnerabilities to coerce the United States to grant their demands for greater autonomy. It was the shared fate between allies that made these threats credible. Failure of the United States to save a clearly downtrodden, but anti-communist, regime could have had significant consequences—from state collapse to wider conflict on the Peninsula and beyond (Christensen 2011). In contrast, secure regimes do not need to coerce. They can provide for themselves or justify going without resources they would seek from a patron.

The South Korean case demonstrates the nuance underlying this logic. Following the outbreak of the Korean War, American decision-makers considered overthrowing South Korean President Rhee multiple times prior to offering him an alliance treaty (FRUS May 4, 1953; FRUS May 29, 1953). U.S. Ambassador Robertson reported back to the State Department, "Rhee in addition to being a shrewd, resourceful trader is also a highly emotional, irrational, illogical fanatic fully capable of leading his country into national suicide" (FRUS Jul. 1, 1953). Given that there was no clear alternative to the Rhee regime, the U.S. extended a highly conditional alliance offer. Secretary Dulles reasoned, "...we must take the strongest possible line with Rhee so that he will not imagine that he can actually run the show" (FRUS Jun. 18, 1953). This sentiment is reflected in the U.S.-ROK alliance treaty with South Korea placing its troops under American military command (Article 4) and in the "Understanding of the United States" clause:

> "It is the understanding of the United States that neither party is obligated, under Article III of the above Treaty, to come to the aid of the other except in the case of an external armed attack against such party; nor shall anything in the present Treaty be construed as requiring the United States to give assistance to Korea except in the event of an armed attack against territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the Republic of Korea" (Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea 1953).

Although the United States concluded mutual defense treaties with the Philippines (1951) and Japan (1951),[19] these treaties lacked this additional "Understanding of the United States" clause (Mutual Defense Treaty Between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America 1951; Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security

[19] The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States and Japan was first signed in 1951 alongside the Treaty of San Francisco that formally ended WWII (Maizland and Cheng 2021). I cite the updated 1960 version of the alliance treaty.

Between the United States of America and Japan 1960). The U.S. was most concerned with South Korea entrapping it in conflict and therefore chose treaty language that effectively left itself an out should South Korea challenge American interests. But surprisingly, the South Korean case demonstrates that the U.S. rarely acted on this clause. South Korea was often successful in coercing the United States for greater autonomy. I select this case and two periods of analysis based on variance in South Korean regime security 1953-2022 as shown below in Figure 1.

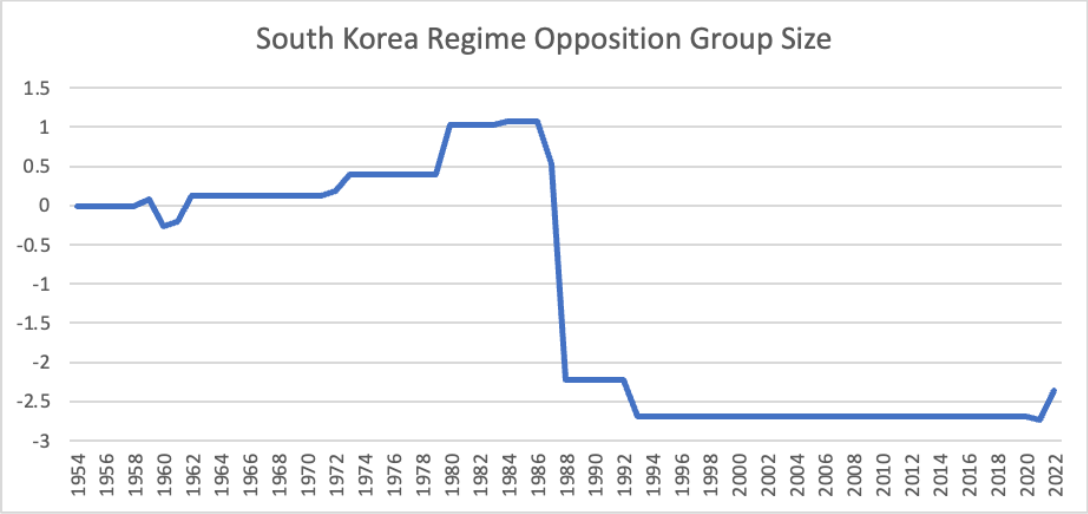

Figure 1 presents an indicator of regime opposition group size (Coppedge et al. 2023) in South Korea from 1953-2022. This metric reflects the extent to which groups within South Korea oppose the current government and want to see the regime removed. Higher levels of regime opposition represent higher levels of regime insecurity. Lower levels of regime opposition group size represent lower levels of regime security. From this data, I examine a period of low regime security (1969-1976) and a period of relatively high regime security (1998-2003) and outline them below in Table 1.[20]

[20] One may wonder why I did not use the 1980s as a period of high regime security given the trend displayed in Table 1. My reasoning is two-fold. First, gathering reliable archival data on American and South Korean decision-making is challenging post 1970s. The United States has not released much of the

Table 1: Episodes of Analysis in U.S.-ROK Relations

Years	Event	Extent of Regime Security	Theory Prediction	Does Outcome Match Theory Prediction?
1969-1976	ROK begins clandestine nuclear weapons program	Low	ROK will successfully coerce U.S.	Yes, ROK coerced the United States to provide robust security guarantees believed to be lacking while lying about the dissolution of their nuclear program.
1998-2003	ROK launches the Sunshine Policy	High	ROK does not need to coerce the U.S. and will act autonomously.	Yes, the U.S. refused to support ROK's Sunshine Policy. ROK had the political capital to disregard U.S. opposition and pursued this policy autonomously.

Burden of Proof

I reviewed several hundred primary source documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series and *National Security Archives* to draft the case. Prior to unpacking each episode, I identify four observable implications of the theory that constitute a burden of proof. This burden of proof includes patterns of behavior that must

Reagan administration's internal communications and dialogues surrounding the U.S.-ROK relations. This data is still in the process of declassification. Similarly, this is a politically sensitive era in South Korea (Han 1988). It can be challenging to find archival data not redacted surrounding unsavory decision-making of the Chun regime during events like the Gwangju Uprising and suppression of pro-democracy student activists. My future work will explore this era in more detail.

be demonstrated in the U.S.-ROK relationship to grant relative confidence in the theory's validity. First, I show that allies have a shared fate following alliance formation. Second, this shared fate influenced what South Korea, as the protege, wanted from the alliance and made its threats of domestic turmoil credible to American decision-makers. Third and relatedly, South Korea feared American abandonment. These fears furthered ROK desire for autonomy. Fourth, South Korea was successful in coercing the United States by leveraging its domestic politics. However, as the alliance matured and South Korean regimes became more secure, South Korea no longer needed to base its foreign policy interests on its ability to coerce the United States. South Korea could circumvent American authority to act on its own volition.

Prior to unpacking each episode, I first layout the relationship between the United States and South Korean military, noting the extent of defense autonomy South Korea possesses within the construct of their alliance to set up the analysis. I then describe conditions surrounding the creation of the U.S.-ROK alliance. This enables me to describe the expectations of both parties prior to their formal alignment. The United States expected an obedient South Korea and significant influence over ROK domestic politics (Cha 2011). South Korea wanted the U.S. to support its aggressive policies for unification and to respect its autonomy over its domestic politics (Cha 2016). These conflicting expectations were largely a function of the political and military relations codified in their alliance treaty. My findings support H1 and H3. South Korea is more likely to disagree with the United States given its relative autonomy over defense policy (H1) and is likely to coerce the United States during periods of low regime security (H3).

Organization of U.S.-ROK Alliance Relations

I provide a revised Figure 1 to reflect the extent to which South Korea is likely to challenge the United States and provide an in-depth discussion of the South Korean Ministry of National Defense (MND) and its position within the ROK government and the South Korean military and its relationship to the United States.

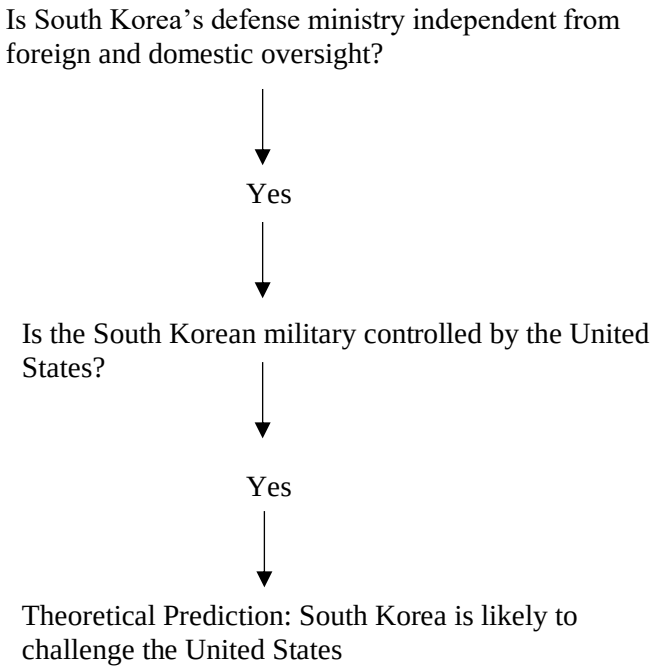
Is South Korea's defense ministry independent from foreign and domestic oversight?
Yes
Is the South Korean military controlled by the United States?
Yes
Theoretical Prediction: South Korea is likely to challenge the United States

Figure 2: ROK Defense Autonomy

South Korean Government and Ministry of National Defense (MND)

South Korea has a quasi-semi-presidential system in which the president is popularly elected and appoints a prime minister who is confirmed by the National Assembly (ROK Constitution, Article 67; 86).[21] [22] The president serves as commander-

[21] The office of the vice president was abolished prior to Park Chung Hee's 1961 military coup during the short lived Second Republic (1960-1961). The Constitution of the Second Republic was relatively ambiguous on the bounds of presidential and prime ministerial authority. This led to constant infighting within the executive branch, allowing Park to capitalize on this disorder with his military coup. Proponents of democracy wanted to avoid this ambiguity following the end of the Chun regime in the late 1980s and choose not to reestablish the vice presidency for this reason (Han 1988).

[22] South Korea is not a pure semi-presidential system because it lacks the office of the vice presidency. The prime minister plays a somewhat dual role of PM and vice president (Elgie and Moestrup 2007).

in-chief of the armed forces and is chairman of the State Council (ROK Constitution, Article 74; 88). Members of the State Council are recommended by the prime minister, who serves as the vice chair, and is appointed by the president. The State Council deliberates on matters including declarations of war and the appointment of the Prosecutor General and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (ROK Constitution, Article 89). Heads of executive ministries, including the Minister of National Defense, are appointed by the president from members of the State Council (ROK Constitution, Article 87; 94).

The Minister of National Defense oversees several bureaus within the MND including those involved with defense policy planning, budgeting, and logistics and weapons management (Han 2006). The MND acts with relative autonomy because it is not subject to American control nor control from rival ROK ministries. This enables the state to develop policies not in line with American preferences—including those that may challenge the American position on China and North Korea (Kim and Kuehn 2022).

South Korean Military and Combined Forces Command

The MND presides over three military branches (army, navy, and air force) and two outside organizations including the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) and the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). South Korea mandates all men between the ages of 18 and 35 complete mandatory military service. The length of service varies depending on the branch of the military they serve in and whether they serve in active or non-active duty, with service times ranging from 21-36 months (De Guzman 2023). The MMA therefore manages matters of military conscription and

wartime military force mobilization (ROK MMA). The DAPA complements this work by managing military research and development and weapons acquisition (ROK DAPA).

The United States and South Korea maintain a unique military relationship unlike any other (Bechtol 2006). The United States is deeply embedded within Korean military (Bell 2007). Many point to the evolutionary nature of these ties, noting the increasing collaboration between the U.S. and South Korean on matters of ROK security including joint military exercises like Team Spirit, Key Resolve, and Foal Eagle (Collins 2014; Kim 2022). One thing, however, remains constant: the institutionalized levers of American control over the ROK military. While both the U.S. and ROK note the value of their partnership, the institutional architecture of the alliance points to one centered on American control. Indeed, the central bodies of the alliance architecture were and remain under American control despite various efforts to transfer control to South Korea (Klinger 2008). These bodies include: the United Nations Command (UNC), the Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK).

The UNC is the oldest of the three. Although formed under United Nations Security Council mandate in response to the 1950 North Korean invasion, the UN had little practical ability to raise a warfighting force (Bell 2012). The United States was and remains the executive agent of the UNC, granting it wide purview over the UNC's affairs (Klinger 2008). Today, the UNC is tasked with ensuring compliance with terms of the 1953 armistice, meeting with North Korean counterparts, and inspecting ROK units stationed along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The UNC is led by an American commander supported by an American deputy. The UNC commander also serves as commander of the CFC and USFK. While a separate entity from the UNC and CFC,

USFK's mission is to support the work of both by contributing American forces to the CFC.

Officially established in 1978, the CFC is unique from the UNC and USFK in its binational or 'equal assignment' organizing principles; "if the chief of a staff is Korean, the deputy is American and vice versa" (per "Mission of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command, USFK). The CFC serves as the warfighting headquarters of the alliance to deter attack and defend South Korea should it fall under attack (Bjerg Moller 2017). The equality of the CFC's binational nature is often a topic of debate by both the U.S. and ROK, leading to slight structural changes. For example, the U.S. and South Korean agreed on new terms of reference in 1994 that would "return" all ROK Armed Forces to the ROK government and turn over "peacetime" operations to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (MND 1995-1996).

These changes are largely symbolic; the Korean Peninsula has not known peace in over 70 years (Clark 2023). There is no peace treaty for the Korean War because it has not ended. North and South Korea remain locked in an uneasy war put on hold by an armistice (Bechtol 2006). Should fighting break out, the U.S. UNC/CFC/USFK Commander and ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff would together advance their warning system to defense readiness condition (DEFCON) 3. This would assign each state's combat forces to the CFC—which is under American control (Bjerg Moller 2017).

Some point to the unique role of the CFC in its reporting to both American and South Korean military leadership, believing this curbs American control (Ehrhardt 2004/2005). However, the CFC is nonetheless led by an American commander supported by a ROK deputy. The power dynamics are not lost on either party; the United States has

and continues to pull the strings of the ROK military. This creates a tangled web of delegation and responsibility. International politics—particularly inter-Korean politics—are messy (Kang 2006) Despite attempts to neatly (re)define the roles of American and ROK military authority, it is often unclear as to who has the final say over what issue (Kim 2006). This dynamic underscores allied disagreement and South Korea's decision to coerce (or not) the United States. The history of these unlikely allies sheds further light on these often-overlooked trends.

Unlikely Allies

The postwar fallout of 1945 created an uneasy situation in East Asia. Countries formally colonized under Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere were newly liberated after suffering the consequences of years—if not decades—of brutal Japanese occupation (Frank et al. 1975). Socially, politically, and economically starved, these states were unlikely champions of a new world order (Haggard et al. 1997). Perhaps most dire post liberation was Korea. The Japanese left behind a broken police state bankrolled by social and economic exploitation (McCune 1946; Haggard et al. 1997). Over 150,000 Koreans were forced to work in factories and mines during the Japanese occupation; an additional 110,000 were conscripted to fight for the Japanese during World War II (Palmer 2007; Kim and Kim 2023). The use of comfort women, or women forced into sexual slavery, was perhaps one of the cruelest forms of exploitation by the Japanese empire. Scholars estimate this system victimized somewhere between 200,000-500,000 women, girls, and boys across Korea, Manchuria, the Philippines, and other Japanese protectorates (Dudden 2022). Much of Korea's economic growth under the Japanese was

short-lived because it was bankrolled by exploitation; total ROK industrial output by 1948 was one-fifth its 1940 output (Frank et al. 1975).

The Korean War exacerbated these social and economic tensions. Although not formal allies until the war's end, the U.S. had long been wary of creating formal defense ties with South Korea. American officials noted that the Rhee government's "own incompetence" rendered it largely incapable in addressing the severe financial and political challenges facing Korea in the post war period (FRUS Mar. 15, 1950). Rhee's policy of 'pukchi'in t'ongil' (unification by marching north) (Gaddis 1982; Cha 2016) legitimized conflict initiation as a viable means to achieve unification. The United States believed an alliance treaty between itself and the ROK would provide it with coercive leverage, including threats to cut off military and economic aid. Secretary Dulles stated, "We [the U.S.] had set aside our own preferences and agreed to such a treaty with the ROK," and while not inherently desirable, "we accepted it as one of the prices that we thought were justified in paying in order to get the armistice" (FRUS Aug. 1, 1953).

Despite signing the alliance treaty on October 1, 1953, significant concern remained in Washington regarding Rhee's ongoing ability to comply with the armistice agreement. To address this concern and to ensure that Rhee understood the limits of the United States, President Eisenhower wrote to Rhee in in late 1953,

> "If I should be forced to conclude that after the coming into force of the Treaty, you might unilaterally touch off a resumption of war in Korea, I could not recommend its ratification and I am certain the Senate would not ratify it. When I formally submit the Treaty to the Senate next January, I must be in a position personally to give clear assurance on this point… From a military standpoint… if you should decide to attack alone, I am convinced that you would expose the ROK forces to a disastrous defeat and they might well be permanently destroyed as an effective military force… To turn now to economic matters, we are making plans for the future which will require me to ask for further appropriations from the Congress during the next session… If I believed that those funds would

> merely create new targets in a war renewed by you, I could not, consistently with my duty, request Congress to authorize this appropriation" (FRUS Nov. 4, 1953).

Eisenhower sent Vice President Nixon to meet with Rhee to obtain Rhee's explicit guarantee that he would not undertake action unilaterally and would respect the terms of the armistice prior to sending the Treaty to the Senate (Cha 2016). Rhee responded with a letter to President Eisenhower, requesting the contents be disclosed only to the President. While a copy of the letter does not exist in government archives, Nixon confirmed the contents of the letter when writing to Secretary Dulles shortly after his visit stating, "His [Rhee's] letter confirmed in express terms the personal assurances which he made in my first conversation with him" (FRUS Nov. 19, 1953). Dulles also referenced the content of the letter in a National Security Council meeting in late November 1953 noting, "We have very largely increased the likelihood that Rhee will not act unilaterally, or at least will not do so without prior consultation with President Eisenhower" (FRUS Nov. 23, 1953). These assurances from Rhee were sufficient for the Americans. Their Mutual Defense Treaty was officially ratified by both countries as of February 1, 1954.

I show that examining U.S.-ROK relations through the lens of ROK domestic politics and regime security reveals an overlooked trend: South Korea has agency in this relationship. It can leverage its domestic insecurity to coerce the United States. When secure, South Korea does not need to engage in costly coercive efforts; it can act alone. This trend reflects a natural progression of relations between allies given the institutionalization of their defense commitments. I outline this logic in Figure 2 and describe each episode in full below.

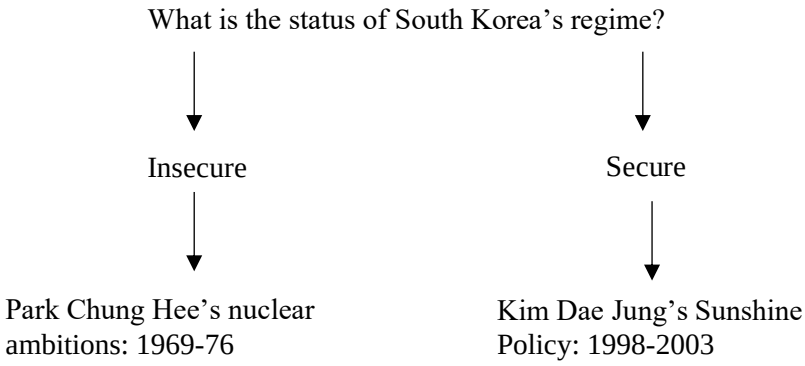
What is the status of South Korea's regime?
Insecure
Secure
Park Chung Hee's nuclear ambitions: 1969-76
Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy: 1998-2003

Figure 3: ROK Regime Security

(1969-1976) Low Regime Security: Park's Clandestine Nuclear Program

Shared Fate & Domestic Politics

The U.S.-ROK relationship following the Nixon Doctrine in 1969 was precarious at best. Two key issues plagued the relationship. First, allies disagreed over the severity of the North Korea threat. North Korea possessed superior military capabilities compared to South Korea and wielded them indiscriminately. Despite several attempts by the DPRK to assassinate ROK leadership, capturing an American naval intelligence ship, and shooting down an American reconnaissance plane in international airspace, the United States refused to authorize retaliatory strikes (Ban 2022). ROK President Park Chung Hee chastised U.S. President Richard Nixon for downplaying the North Korean threat, arguing,

> "...Kim Il-Sung during the past 10 years or so has almost completed war preparations to unify the country by force. He is looking for an opportunity to invade the South. He has not done so because of the U.S. commitments to the ROK and the presence of American troops in our country. Kim will provoke a war if he believes that this American policy toward the ROK is going to change or has changed. Kim's objective in making various provocations is to have American troops stationed in the ROK withdraw as they have done in South Vietnam, alienate the ROK from the U.S. and have the U.S. not intervene when anything happens in Korea" (FRUS Aug. 21, 1969).

The ROK military was unable to defend itself without the United States. South Korea requested military and economic support that American leadership was increasingly unwilling to give. Second, concerns over the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella and U.S. troop withdrawals from the Korean Peninsula drove a wedge between allies. The U.S. often took these steps unilaterally without consulting ROK leadership. By the early 1970s, the U.S. began the withdrawal of its Seventh Division, which left more Korean troops in Vietnam than American troops in South Korea (Kwak 2003).[23] However, ROK Foreign Minister Choe Kyuha was not informed of this decision until six months after the withdrawal began (Kim and Vogel 2011). Tens of thousands of American soldiers were withdrawn "under their noses," including the American trip wire (Kim 2003).[24] This left only Korean troops to defend the entirety of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Adding to Park's anxiety was the volatile political landscape he faced at home; he was losing his grip on power. His Democratic Republican Party (DRP) was paralyzed by factional rivalry and he was unable to deliver the economic returns he had promised (Kim and Vogel 2011). By 1970, ROK Assemblyman Kim Dae Jung won the presidential nomination for the rival New Democratic Party (NDP). U.S. Ambassador Sneider reported to Washington that Kim was "challenging Park by name and issue," and that "Park had to be peeled off the ceiling" following one of Kim's most scathing rebukes (FRUS Nov. 3, 1970). South Korea leveraged its domestic instability to extract concessions from the United States. ROK news editorials guided public discourse to

[23] At the request of the American government, South Korea sent over 300,000 troops across nine years to support the American military effort in Vietnam (Snyder 2018).

[24] This violated the 10-Point List of 1965 which provided robust American security guarantees to entice the ROK to send troops to Vietnam (Kim 2003).

pressure the Americans. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economic Planning Board, Chang Kiyong, published the following in his influential newspaper, the *Hanguk Ilbo*,

> "If the United States is not to repeat her mistake in Vietnam, it is hoped that the United States will not overlook the fact that many economic tasks remain in this land--problems which are more important than the financial stabilization program that U.S. aid officials in Korea would refer to so often. Unless this is solved, economic sufficiency can hardly be expected even in 10 years" (Macdonald 1992).

Park simultaneously took drastic steps to decrease South Korea's economic and military dependence on the United States, telling the public "Independence is the only way for survival." These efforts culminated in his institution of the Yushin ('Restoration') Constitution in 1972. In line with my theoretical expectations, Park sought to simultaneously maximize his domestic authority while reducing reliance on the United States (Kim and Sorensen 2011). Park's increasingly autocratic tendencies sparked concern in American policy circles. As undesirable it was for both allies, the United States had a shared fate with South Korea; it couldn't just walk away. U.S. Ambassador to Korea, Philip Habib, told Secretary of State Kissinger,

> "Given the nature of our commitment and the historical relationship, the deep involvement-- the very deep involvement, both physical and financial, that we actually have in the country, and all the ties that are involved-- if you get an outbreak of hostilities, you would immediately involve the United States in terms of its historical and security commitments" (FRUS Jan. 24, 1974).

The domestic political situation in South Korea posed a serious problem for the United States. Park's autocratic initiatives undermined viable alternatives to his regime should it collapse. Park justified his militant approach to President Ford by arguing North Koreans "are the most militant, radical Communists of all Communist Party nations in the world," who would "resort to reckless and adventurous acts, which ordinary people could not

predict" (FRUS Nov. 22, 1974). Habib validated Park's claims, reporting, "Park faces a serious problem of maintaining power, and that affects our interests because if you get political instability you can largely presume the possibility of North Korean adventurism," such that "Park recognizes the threat to his continuation of power…and that's why it affects us [the U.S.]" (FRUS Jan. 25, 1974). In addition to the domestic Korean situation being "lousy and politically repressive," Habib argued that because the U.S. had roughly thirty-eight thousand troops stationed in South Korea, it was "one of the few countries in the world in which we [the U.S.] could be engaged in combat without even knowing it" (FRUS Jan. 6, 1975). This shared fate played a central role in the overwhelmingly conciliatory approach of the United States to Park's illicit nuclear program.

Coercion in Practice

By mid-1974, American suspicions of ROK nuclear interest reached Washington. Ambassador Habib reported from the U.S. Embassy in Seoul that,

> "We have a visceral feeling, based only on growing independence of ROK attitudes toward defense matters and increasing doubts about the durability of U.S. commitments, that most senior ROK defense planners desire to obtain capability eventually to produce nuclear weapons" (National Security Archive Jul. 30, 1974).

South Korea was well aware of U.S. anxiety over the status of their nuclear program and took several measures to sidestep American oversight. These moves were purposeful; Park told his advisory circle, "only when we prove our ability to complete things for ourselves even if the U.S. does not help us," will the U.S. give in (Kim 2003). Rather than going through the United States, South Korea sought nuclear reactors from Canada and a chemical separation plant needed to enrich plutonium from France. Ambassador Sneider delivered a sobering report to American officials, describing Park's nuclear

efforts as his "second option, the 'what if' option," because "he wants to accelerate independence." When pressed on extent of Park's commitment to his nuclear program, Sneider replied,

> "He knows we do not like it, so he does it in a clandestine way…We can no longer tell him what to do… Park knows we are holding back. We have to talk to him promptly. Everytime he is worried, he tends to be erratic and he plays silly games…Our commanders have to be able to say 'no' to Park" (FRUS Mar. 27, 1975).

Despite Sneider's warning to pursue a sharper line with the ROK, the United States took a remarkably passive tone. Rather than engaging with ROK officials unilaterally, the U.S. first consulted the French and Canadians about the undesirability of the ROK nuclear program (National Security Archive Jun. 11, 1975). This strategy is puzzling given the structure of the U.S.-ROK alliance. This alliance was designed to maximize American control, yet the United States did not directly confront South Korea over its clandestine program nor demand it stop immediately (Fitzpatrick 2016). NSC staffers sent Secretary Kissinger a report stating that unless the U.S. made significant concessions to alleviate ROK anxieties over American troop withdrawals, "the basic incentives for ROK nuclear weapons development will remain," because, "the Koreans undoubtedly have their limits…and the request from the U.S. for them to forego a planned reprocessing plant may approach that limit" (FRUS Jul. 24, 1975). South Korea was actively dictating the interests of the alliance.

In line with my predictions, rather than threatening and punishing the ROK, the United States offered a wide array of incentives for the ROK to cancel its contracts with Canada and France, including supporting a peaceful ROK nuclear energy program and facilitating a multilateral reprocessing venture among American allies in Asia. The

United States favored a "relatively limited approach" leveraging the sale of a second nuclear reactor to South Korea:

> "A request for an Export-Import Bank loan of $132 million and an additional $117 million of credit guarantees, to finance South Korea's purchase of a second U.S. reactor, KORI II, is now before Congress. We believe this loan and the sale of the U.S. reactor would be beneficial to South Korea's economy and could also be arranged in a way so as to be helpful to our non-proliferation objectives…If our expectations for this approach are borne out, we will have significantly complicated Korean acquisition of a nuclear capability. At the same time, we expect President Park to continue with this program, probably on a more covert and delayed basis" (National Security Archive Aug. 4, 1975).

Two parts of this report are particularly striking given the severe power hierarchy between allies. First, the United States did not want to confront the ROK directly over the nuclear issue. Rather, the U.S. leveraged a pre-existing contract to coax Park's compliance. Second, American officials admitted that this approach was unlikely to stop the ROK's pursuit of nuclear weapons, but they pursued it anyway. South Korea rejected the American request and officials from the Korean Atomic Energy Research Institute argued that "since the U.S. has not agreed to discuss reprocessing in the past, it is presumptuous for the U.S. to expect to interrogate Koreans in detail on [a] private arrangement with [the] French." In a further rebuke of American reprisal, Korean officials claimed,

> "Everyone in Korea's nuclear program has been U.S.-educated…[and have] a personal preference for doing business with the U.S.. Koreans speak English, not French, and think American. However, they are very 'mission oriented' and if they can't get what they want from the U.S., they will go where they have to, to get it. Koreans are not willing to accept anything less than a laboratory in Korea of [the] kind purchased from France" (National Security Archive Aug. 26, 1975).

Adding insult to injury, the U.S. could not understand why South Korea was angered that Japan, a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), had an

autonomous nuclear program (National Security Archive Oct. 24, 1975).[25] ROK Ambassador to the U.S., Hahm Pyong Choon, told Deputy Secretary of State Robert Ingersoll that in addition to the difficult ROK-Japan relationship, "it looked as if Korea was being asked to give up something Japan was allowed to have" (National Security Archive Sept. 9, 1975). Sneider sent the following reflection to Washington after a particularly tense meeting with ROK Deputy Prime Minister Nam Duk Woo:

> "Nam concluded by saying very frankly, senior ROK officials resented 'American arm-twisting' on this issue and were fearful about President Park's reaction…I pointed out that risk involved for ROKG was jeopardizing U.S. support for development of peaceful nuclear plans… Nam appreciated the argumentation given [to] him but [was] as not optimistic. He thought ROKG would probably, if necessary, forgo KORI II loan and seek purchase of nuclear plants from the French if no alternative available" (National Security Archive Sept. 3, 1975).

In a last-ditch attempt, Kissinger authorized Sneider to remind ROK officials of "positive aspects of U.S. nuclear cooperation with ROK in non-sensitive areas" should South Korea cancel the French contract. These 'positive aspects' included assurances of a robust U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula, military aircraft transfers, and support for ROK force modernization (Taliaferro 2019). The U.S. was also willing to offer strong support for South Korea's loan request for the KORI-II reactor and willingness to facilitate sales of additional nuclear reactors and fuel in Korea in exchange for ROK compliance (National Security Archive Dec. 24, 1975).

The ROK eventually agreed to the U.S. position in return for the concessions mentioned above. But the extent to which the United States really succeeded is questionable for two reasons. First, it was not American pressure that ultimately forced the ROK to accept the American position; it was Canada. The Canadians refused to sell

[25] South Korea signed the NPT in 1975.

nuclear technology to South Korea unless ROK officials assured their original plans for a reprocessing plant would be canceled. Second, the agreement lacked adequate reporting standards to ensure South Korea remained compliant. South Korea simply gave its word that it would end its program without having to allow investigations in its laboratories to validate its promise (Fitzpatrick 2016). Consider the following exchange between Kissinger and Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allen MacEachen,

> **Kissinger:** I think it's safe to say we've delivered the knockout blow.
>
> **MacEachen:** We'll [Canada and South Korea] be signing our nuclear cooperation agreement on Monday… We said we would sign if they state publicly that they won't build a reprocessing plant and that they will shelve it. They haven't said this is gone forever and ever.
>
> **Kissinger:** But the end result is, there will be no reprocessing plant.
>
> **MacEachen:** Yes. In the short-term we've taken care of that.
>
> **Kissinger:** That's fine (National Security Archive Jan 23, 1976).

This 'knock-out' blow was meaningless. It took the United States two years to get Park to agree to stop South Korea's nuclear program, and it was only through cooperation with third parties—France and Canada—that the U.S. was able to make significant progress in influencing Park's decision-making (Kim and Vogel 2011). Even when the U.S. did get Park's agreement, South Korea's clandestine nuclear activities continued well through the Chun presidency (Kim 2003). This episode provides robust support for H1 and H3. South Korea held significantly different views from the U.S. on its right to pursue a nuclear program and successfully coerced the United States to provide security concessions by leveraging its domestic politics. The United States gave into Korean demands because of their shared fate. I next discuss how these dynamics operate under increasing parity by examining ROK President Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy.

(1998-2003) High Regime Security: Kim's Sunshine Policy

Shared Fate and Domestic Politics

By the late nineties, the ROK was reaching greater economic parity with the United States despite a series of setbacks, including the Asian financial crisis and massive IMF bailout (Haggard et al. 1999). The inauguration of Kim Dae Jung marked the first time in the country's history that a ruling party peacefully transferred power to a democratically elected opponent. Kim's reputation preceded him; his pro-democracy activism during South Korea's decades of dictatorship was heralded by international media as a sign of significant social progress (Ahn 2001). Kim proposed a progressive foreign policy agenda; one based on reconciliation with North Korea. In his inaugural address, Kim stated,

> "Inter-Korean relations must be evolved on the basis of reconciliation and cooperation as well as the establishment of peace. The Cold War-style South-North relations have not allowed members of separated families, for over half a century, to ascertain even whether their own parents and brothers and sisters were alive or dead, let alone carry on dialogue and exchanges, must end as soon as possible. I cannot but feel boundless shame before our ancestors who maintained one unified country for more than 1,300 years" (quoted in *The New York Times*, 1998).

Kim unveiled his ambitious Sunshine Policy shortly after (Kang 2006). Building on his predecessor's Nordpolitik efforts to reconcile with states in the communist bloc, the Sunshine Policy centered on softening North Korea's position toward the ROK by encouraging regular dialogue and economic exchange (Sanford 1993). Kim argued that separating politics from economics would enable the North and South to engage in productive discussions that could serve as the basis for building an enduring peace. The Sunshine Policy centered on three principles. First, the ROK would not tolerate military provocation by North Korea. Second, South Korea did not seek to absorb North Korea.

Third, South Korea was willing and able to cooperate with North Korea in settling disputes (Paik 2002). Kim sought to restore the ROK's role as an actor capable of heading this policy without American oversight.

This policy was highly controversial in Korean and American policy circles. Domestically, Kim could not count on support from the National Assembly. His own Democratic Party lacked the absolute majority needed to pass the major initiatives capable of making substantive economic offers to North Korea. Conservative critics heralded the Sunshine Policy as "naive appeasement," that failed to hold the North accountable for its provocations (Levin and Han 2002). They resented the one-sided nature of the policy; there was no guarantee North Korea would reciprocate. Kim's surprising announcement that the first inter-Korean summit was to be held just before critical legislative elections was viewed by rivals in the Grand National Party (GNP) as politically motivated and further polarized DPRK engagement (Kim 2002). Nonetheless, Kim benefited from relatively wide public support given the importance of his election (Moon 2001). He was not a member of the former military clique that clung to power for decades. Kim's election signified a new era of South Korean politics in which the state could stand on its own without needing to rely on the military backing of the United States for legitimacy (Kim 2000).

Internationally, Kim found a willing partner in the Clinton administration. President Clinton told Kim "You take the driver's seat, and I will take the seat beside to help you" (Snyder 2018). A brief prepared for Secretary of State Albright's visit to South Korea highlights the administration's goal to capitalize on Kim's efforts,

> "Your meetings here can also impress upon the highest levels of the ROKG that plans for the June [inter-Korean] summit should focus not only on creating an atmosphere of mutual candor and trust (often lacking in our relations with

> previous ROK administrations), but on creating results as well… Politically, Kim Dae Jung has moved assertively to fill a year-long power vacuum, confounding skeptics by embracing the rigorous IMF reform program while reaching out to domestic foes with a 'politics of inclusion' unprecedented in Korea" (National Security Archive Apr. 23, 1998).

Despite this optimism, the U.S. was skeptical of South Korea taking the lead in managing a dialogue with North Korea. Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Stanley Roh, was cautioned by the State Department, "the Kim administration is committed to the reform program,[26] but the real pain is yet to be felt" (National Security Archive Apr. 18, 1998). The U.S. publicly commended Kim's performance but privately noted, "he is also a leader without a parliamentary majority who could face serious domestic and external challenges in the coming months" (National Security Archive Apr. 23, 1998).

North Korea had already abandoned the Agreed Framework, a 1994 agreement between the U.S. and DPRK that promised North Korea the provision of American light-water reactors in exchange for the North's commitment to deproliferation and monitoring of its compliance (Martin 2002). The U.S. was concerned about Pyongyang's "paranoia" which was "deleterious to our [U.S.] interests, if not threatening," because "this issue could also affect the bilateral ROK-DPRK dialogue" (National Security Archive Apr. 13, 1998). The U.S. and ROK had a shared fate; the actions taken by one side with North Korea would influence the other's. It was because of this shared fate that Kim deemed U.S. cooperation with the Sunshine Policy as "critical" (Kim 2008).

The DPRK cared about the American position and its frustration with the U.S. often undermined inter-Korean dialogue. Indeed, Kim Jong-il stated that the purpose of a

[26] This refers to the terms of South Korea's bailout agreement with the IMF. These terms included major economic restructuring in labor, interest rates, and foreign debt (Coe and Kim 2002).

particularly provocative August 1998 missile launch was to capture U.S. political attention (France-Presse 1998). In doing so, it weakened the ROK's ability to convince opponents of the Sunshine Policy that North Korea could be a reasonable partner. The Kim administration repeatedly reminded the U.S. not to be "too greedy" in pursuing "humble" steps forward with the North (National Security Archive Apr. 17, 2000). Following a briefing by ROK National Security Advisor, Hwang Won Tok, American embassy officials reported the following to Washington:

> "Perhaps most striking in Hwang's comments today was his effort to downplay expectations… In particular he returned several times to the idea that President Kim intended this to be the first of a long series of high-level meetings, leaving it to his successors to bring to fruition a gradual resolution of the long-standing tensions on the Peninsula…President Kim hoped… to create an atmosphere of mutual trust in which many of the security concerns would be easily and naturally resolved" (National Security Archive Apr. 17, 2000).

The United States and South Korea had opposing expectations for what could be expected from a dialogue with the North. In agreement with my theoretical expectations, the Kim administration had the political capital to pursue its preferred strategy alone, without needing to coerce the United States.

Coercion in Practice

What is striking about Kim's strategy is how much it differed from the Park administration's only a few decades prior in seeking to garner American support. Both Park and Kim faced serious political problems at home, yet the Kim administration did not leverage its domestic problems to coerce the U.S. to abide by the Sunshine Policy (Kim 2004). South Korea had the means under Kim to back up its ambitious proposals with the North despite American pushback. In addition to providing large quantities of humanitarian aid, the ROK government encouraged South Korean companies to pursue modest ties with North Korea. One of the most notable ventures during this era was the

Hyundai group's tourism project at Mount Kumgang in North Korea (Kang 2006). While the project was later scrapped, it served as a basis for later ROK business ventures in the North such as the Kaesong industrial complex (Levin and Han 2002). South Korea had the goods to back up its policy agenda; it did not need to coerce the United States. However, its shared fate with the United States posed significant problems, not only in getting the North Koreans to the negotiating table, but in getting them to stay there (Bae 2010). This problem intensified under the Bush administration.

Bush did not trust the North Korean regime nor believed the DPRK could remain compliant with any negotiation that inhibited their path toward nuclear proliferation (Mcgrory 2001). ROK President Kim went to Washington shortly after Bush's inauguration to persuade him to support the Sunshine Policy. Bush rejected the prospect of any dialogue with North Korea, stating,

> "I am concerned about the fact that the North Koreans are shipping weapons around the world… Part of the problem in dealing with North Korea, there's not very much transparency. We're not certain as to whether or not they're keeping all terms of the agreements. And that's part of the issue that the President [of South Korea] and I discussed, is when you make an agreement with a country that is secretive, how do you-- how are you aware as to whether or not they're keeping the terms of the agreement" (Bush and Kim 2001).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States furthered the divide between the United States and South Korea on the North Korea problem (Perkovich 2003). Although North Korean state media condemned the attacks as a "very regretful and tragic incident [that] reminds once again of the gravity of terrorism," the DPRK was deemed part of an 'Axis of Evil' also including Iraq and Iran by Bush in an address to Congress two weeks prior to a scheduled trip to Seoul (Bush 2002; Tertitskiy 2018). ROK officials worried that Bush's fiery rhetoric could be a precursor to military action against North Korea. Kim reflected that "I was very concerned… A war against North Korea would mean the

sacrifice of millions of people's lives. It could even lead to the miserable result of Korea being in ashes, complete ashes" (Chinoy 2008).

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Thomas Hubbard, warned Bush upon his arrival to Seoul in March 2001, "...the South Koreans don't know why you said it [Axis of Evil] … The last thing the South Koreans want is a war on the Korean Peninsula… and the speech, to them, raised that prospect (Chinoy 2008). ROK Ambassador to the U.S., Yang Sung Chol, warned Hubbard, "We understand the president is going to mention the 'Axis of Evil' in his speech. We think this is terrible. It's anathema to everything Kim Dae Jung stands for (Chinoy 2008). Kim later laid into Bush during a private summit, chastising his ignorance,

> "I answered that you can have dialogue even with evil if it is necessary. It's not for making friends; it's for pursuing your national interests. Even as President Reagan called the Soviet Union an evil empire, he also had dialogue. So then, why not North Korea? Why can't you have dialogue with North Korea? If you do not pursue the option of dialogue, the only viable option here can be war. However, according to the UN Command [in the ROK], about 1.5 million people in Seoul could die from that war, and that includes tens of thousands of Americans living in Seoul as well. So even if we have to wage another war on the Korean Peninsula, that should be the last resort, the last option, after taking all the other options including dialogue. At the time, North Korea was consistently asking for dialogue with the United States. So why can you not have that option of dialogue" (Chinoy 2008)?

Despite his appeal to reason, Kim failed to secure Bush's compliance. The United States refused to engage North Korea, citing concerns over the DPRK's possession of a clandestine uranium enrichment program. Bush further demanded that inter-Korean cooperation halt until North Korea agreed to give up its nuclear program for good. Kim condemned the policies, arguing,

> "Pressure and isolation have never been successful with Communist countries… [whereas] inducing such countries to open up through dialogue has always been successful" (Brooke 2002; Chinoy 2008).

Tension between allies continued to rise as ROK public perception of American interests soured. Anti-American sentiment skyrocketed among the South Korean public as they believed the U.S. was placing insurmountable barriers to peace on the Peninsula.[27] Rather than threaten domestic demise to coerce American compliance, South Korea pursued the Sunshine Policy autonomously (Bae 2010). These efforts were slow and faced many setbacks, but as noted above, Kim himself expected this. The shared fate between the ROK and U.S. created problems for inter-Korean engagement as American behavior reflected poorly on ROK intentions across both the Clinton and Bush administrations. The DPRK linked its diplomatic success with South Korea with the United States and vice versa (Cha 2002). This evidence provides significant support for H1 and H3. South Korea had a significantly different view of navigating relations with North Korea from the United States. Although angered by American intransigence, South Korea embraced its autonomy to pursue engagement with North Korea regardless of U.S. support.

The trends identified in this case demonstrate that proteges are more than puppets of a more powerful patron; they often dictate the interests of the alliance. Should the alliance worked as the United States intended, these episodes would not exist. South Korea would have accepted the American position and halted their nuclear program and the Sunshine Policy (following the inauguration of the Bush administration). The fact that these episodes did occur demonstrates the uneasy dynamic surrounding the limits of a patron's authority often overlooked in prior work. Protégés can leverage their relative weakness when needed to force their desired outcome on the patron.

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[27] This anti-Americanism was primarily anti-Bushism. Most South Koreans were not overtly antagonistic toward the U.S.-ROK alliance, but rather Bush's foreign policy (Cumings 2005).

Conclusion

Proteges have tremendous agency in alliance politics. The U.S.-ROK alliance demonstrates this logic at work. The institutional structure of U.S.-ROK military relations creates wide latitude for disagreement in terms of defense policy and its implementation. South Korea's Ministry of National Defense is independent from American or other domestic ROK ministry oversight. This enables South Korea to develop policy that may counter American preferences, such as Kim's Sunshine Policy. This creates friction as these policies trickle down to implementation by the ROK military—who is ultimately responsible to American command.

Regime security plays an important role in explaining when and how South Korea chooses to act on this disagreement. I show that that as South Korea's regime security decreased, its ability to coerce the United States increased. Both the United States and South Korea recognized their shared fate; both knew that the U.S. could not let South Korea fall. However, as ROK regime security increased, it did not need to coerce the United States because it could provide for itself—freeing itself from its patron's oversight. Indeed, evidence from U.S.-ROK relations provide robust support for this argument.

This case becomes increasingly salient through its comparison with the U.S.-Japan alliance in the next chapter. While the U.S.-Japan alliance was similarly formed after World War II and during severe domestic instability in the protégé, I demonstrate that Japan was far less likely to disagree with and thus unlikely to coerce the United States. My findings support my theoretical expectations; Japan lacks the defense independence experienced by South Korea. It is unable to maintain its own military or participate in war (Cooney 2007). The United States designed the Japanese constitution

and its political institutions to mirror American interests (Hellegers 2001). These institutions endured and continue to influence the comparatively amicable relations between the United States and Japan compared to the U.S. and South Korea.

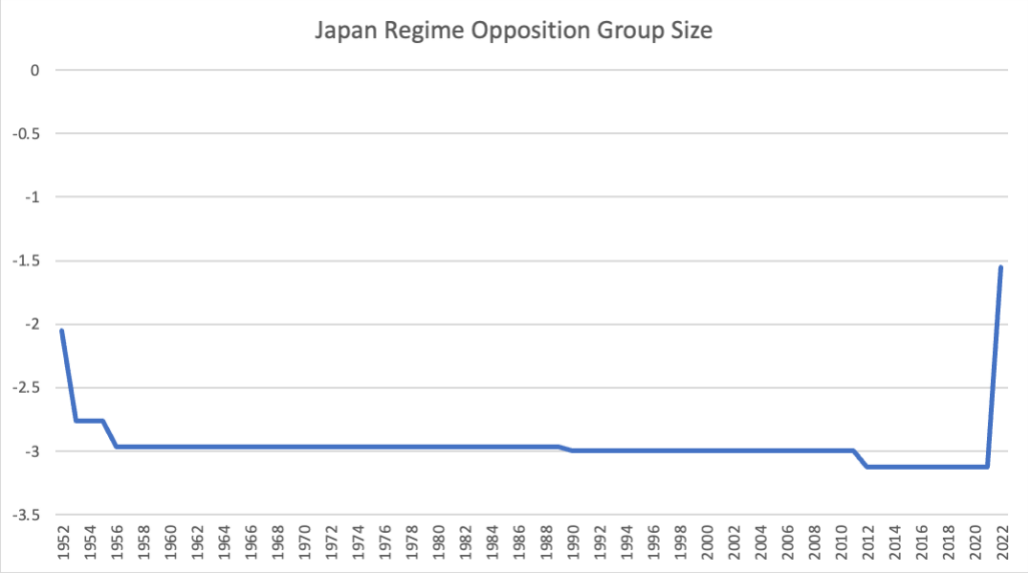
CHAPTER 5: THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

Japan is unlike any other American ally in Asia. American occupation forces wanted to "win Japan" rather than constrain it following the end of World War II (Cha 2016). In contrast to South Korea, early American reports on the prospects of an alliance with Japan regularly allude to the need to treat Japan as an equal partner. One such report writes, "It is in the long run interest of the United States that Japan be an independent, economically stable and thus reliable ally rather than a colonial, resentful appendage…" (FRUS Sept. 30, 1954). The Ambassador to Japan, Dean Rusk, argued "we [the U.S.] cannot be put into a position of forcing our way into Japan" (FRUS, Nov. 14, 1951).

This case is ideal for testing H2 and H3. Regarding H2, Japan lacks the defense autonomy granted to South Korea as it is unable to maintain a professional military. Japan did not have a defense ministry on par with other domestic ministries until 2007 (Lee 2007). This case is also ideal for testing H3 relating to regime security. I demonstrate that even when Japan's regime was relatively insecure, it still was unable to coerce the U.S. to the extent that South Korea did. Through its comparison with the South Korean case, the U.S.-Japan relationship demonstrates the dynamics of an alliance in which the protégé's interests largely reflect that of its patron. Although revised in 1960, the U.S.-Japan alliance treaty continues to grant wide latitude to the American military and its interests (Swenson-Wright 2005). For example, Article VI is dedicated to defining the authority of the United States in Japan, granting the U.S. the "use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan" (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States of America and Japan 1960). Notably, this treaty lacks the

additional understanding clause of the United States featured in the U.S.-ROK alliance treaty.

The U.S.-Japan case is an important contrast to that of the U.S.-ROK alliance. It highlights the conditionality surrounding the desirability of a protégé to challenge their patron and their ability to coerce. The United States set up the modern Japanese state to reflect its interests and undermined the ability of Japan to have an autonomous military that could credibly challenge the United States. The U.S. therefore did not need to leave itself an out with Japan as it did with South Korea. This is also reflected in the allied interactions that I describe in Figure 1 below.



Similar to the prior chapter, I rely on a metric of regime opposition group size, 1950-2022. This scale reflects the extent to which groups within Japan oppose the current government and want to see the regime removed (Coppedge et al. 2023). Higher levels of regime opposition represent higher levels of regime insecurity. Lower levels of regime opposition group size represent lower levels of regime insecurity. As indicated by the chart, Japan enjoyed relative domestic stability from 1955 until early 2021. Much of this

stability is owed to the nearly uninterrupted tenure of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) formed in 1955 (Crespo 1995). This was a merger between two conservative political parties, the Liberal Party and the Japan Democratic Party—which decreased the likelihood of fracturing between conservative groups (Katz 1998). I examine a period of low regime security (1954) and a period of relatively high regime security (1969-1972) and outline them below in Table 1.

Table 1: Episodes of Analysis in U.S.-Japan Relations

Years	Event	Extent of Regime Security	Theory Prediction	Does Outcome Match Theory Prediction?
1954	The *Fukuryu Maru* Incident	Low	Japan will not coerce the United States. It will accept the premise of American interests but push back on other details. The U.S. will give in to Japan's limited because of Japan's domestic instability.	Yes, Japan accepted monetary compensation for the victims and did not coerce the U.S. to meet other financial demands for the fishing industry and the victims' families.
1968-1972	The Reversion of Okinawa	High	Japan will not coerce the United States and will accept the reversion terms of the U.S. even if the terms are unequal. The U.S. will pressure Japan to acquiesce to its demands and Japan will largely accept.	Yes, Japan accepted the majority of American demands even though the deal was unequal.

Burden of Proof

I reviewed several hundred primary source documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series along with a series of memoirs and autobiographies to write this case. Prior to unpacking each episode, I first identify four observative implications of the theory that constitute a burden of proof. This burden of proof includes patterns of behavior that must be demonstrated in the U.S.-Japan relationship to grant relative confidence in the theory's validity. First, the United States and Japan had a shared fate following alliance formation. Second, this shared fate influenced what Japan, as the protégé, wanted from the alliance. Third, Japanese domestic institutions were, and largely remain, designed to reflect American interests. This decreased and continues to decrease the likelihood that allies will disagree with one another on matters of defense.

However, alliances are imperfect unions. While no treaty can ensure total allied agreement, it can codify institutions designed to ensure the interests of one ally are overwhelmingly engrained into the politics of the other. Fourth, while Japanese interests were largely aligned with the United States, these interests can diverge. It is the shared fate between allies that keeps the United States in line and grants Japan agency. Fifth, the likelihood and scope of disagreement between Japan and the United States is low. When disagreements do arise, Japan can leverage its domestic politics to influence the United States. Japan does not need to coerce the United States. It is heavily dependent on the U.S. for its security and the heavy-handed American occupation from 1945-52 undercut the possibility of Japanese belligerence.

Prior to unpacking each episode in full, I first outline the history of U.S.-Japan allied relations. I then describe the conditions surrounding the U.S.-Japan alliance. In

doing so, I describe the interests of each ally prior to their alignment and how this later influenced their relations. In contrast to South Korea, American policy was to 'win [over] Japan' rather than conquer it (Cha 2016). The United States believed a revival of Japan to be their key to containment in East Asia (Hein et al. 2014). The task then became building up the Japanese economy while eradicating both the former military elite and leftist elements. These themes underscored allied relations and continue to influence their interactions today. Japan and the United States maintain relatively amicable alliance ties (Stokes 2015). In line with H2, this is largely because of the American control exerted over Japan's defense institutions early into the postwar state's creation. I describe these themes further below.

Organization of U.S.-Japan Allied Relations

Figure 1 represents the likelihood of Japan challenging the United States. Rarely did Japan outright defy the United States. While disagreement does occur, its frequency and severity were far more restrained than that of other American allies in Asia (Medeiros et al. 2008). I outline the reasoning for this relative harmony of allied preferences below with an in-depth discussion of Japanese domestic politics, with specific focus on the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA), Ministry of Defense (MOD), and the relationship between the United States military and the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF).

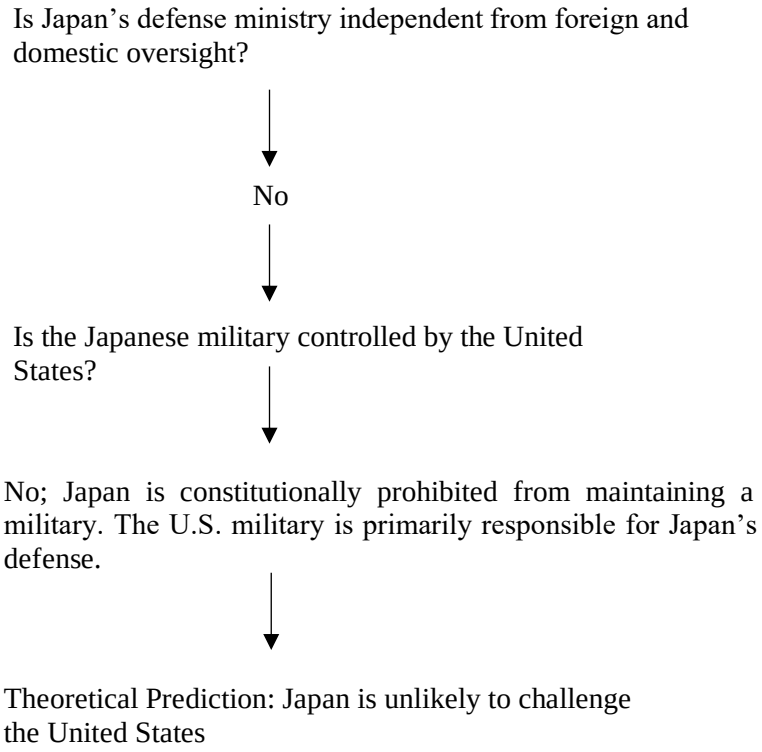

Is Japan's defense ministry independent from foreign and domestic oversight?
No
Is the Japanese military controlled by the United States?
No; Japan is constitutionally prohibited from maintaining a military. The U.S. military is primarily responsible for Japan's defense.
Theoretical Prediction: Japan is unlikely to challenge the United States

Figure 2: Japanese Defense Autonomy

The Japanese Government

Japan has a parliamentary system in which the prime minister is selected from, and serves at the pleasure of, the national legislature (Constitution of Japan, Article 66). The legislature, or Diet, is bicameral, with the lower chamber being the House of Representatives and the upper chamber being the House of Councilors (Hayao 1993). Both chambers are popularly elected, but the House of Representatives is the dominant legislative force (Cox et al. 2000). While legislation must pass through both chambers prior to being enacted, the House of Representatives can override the House of Councilors on matters of national budget, selecting the prime minister, and agreeing to international treaties (Meyer and Naka 1998).

Executive power rests in the Cabinet (Constitution of Japan, Article 65).

The prime minister serves as head of the Cabinet and selects candidates for its membership, which is approved by the Legislature (Constitution of Japan, Article 66). Japan's constitution features one unique attribute: Article 9. Following the end of World War II, the United States prohibited Japan from developing a military and insisted it renounce its right to partake in war (Caprio and Sugita 2007). Until early 2007, Japan did not have a Ministry of Defense (MOD). Rather, it had the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) established—quite controversially—under the Yoshida government in in 1954 (Chai 1997; Liff 2015). I describe the significance and meaning of this clause in later sections but note the relevance of it in understanding Japanese domestic institutions below.

The Japanese Defense Agency and Ministry of Defense

The JDA was not an independent ministry and was instead placed directly under the authority of Yoshida (Cooney 2007). Other ministries also sent agents to serve in the JDA to ensure that it was kept in check (Singh 2013). There was significant fear early into its creation and throughout its tenure that the JDA would enable militarist elements reminiscent of the late 1930s to again take power (Miyashita 2007). Japan also was and remains constitutionally prohibited to maintain a military. It therefore gave little authority to the JDA other than matters primarily relating to homeland security while the bulk of Japanese security was delegated to the United States (Shoichi 1997).

However, as the state matured and at the pressure of the United States, Japan's interpretation of Article 9 gradually became more flexible (Liff 2015). In 2007, the JDA was replaced with a Ministry of Defense, whose authority is on par with that of other ministries (Lee 2007). One of its primary tasks is maintaining the Self Defense Forces

(SDF)—that while not an official military—do cooperate with the U.S. military to ensure the defense of Japan and partake in joint military exercises with the United States and its allies (Smith 2019). The MOD, while more independent than the JDA, still operates under a relatively strict purview. This restraint is both institutional and personal. Japan's Article 9 obligations combined with the Japanese public's wariness of the risks of military buildup make it challenging to grant the defense ministry a wider purview such as that of maintaining a professional military (Lee 2007).

The Self Defense Force (SDF) and United States Forces Japan (USFJ)

The United States occupation forces completely disbanded the Japanese military following the end of World War II. It similarly broke up the national police force into smaller, local level police units (Buck 1967). However, the threat of Soviet expansionism along with the beginning of the Korean War led U.S. decision-makers to question the wisdom of forbidding Japan to maintain any defense forces. This led to a gradual buildup of light Japanese reserve forces that was established as an official Self Defense Force composed of ground, maritime, and air branches in 1954 (Madsen 1993).

The authority of the SDF has grown over the last several decades—largely due to the pressuring of the United States and the changing international environment (Akaha 1998). For example, following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Japan passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law that would enable it to contribute—through the SDF—to international efforts to combat terrorism. Japan similarly sent SDF forces to assist the United States in noncombat roles (Nakatani 2002).

The Japanese Defense Forces Act was revised following the elevation of the JDA to MOD in the early 2000s (Takahata 2021). The SDF could be dispatched worldwide for

the first time in its history to combat piracy. Similar acts were put in place in the mid 2010s so that the SDF could defend allied weapons under the guise that doing so contributed to Japan's defense. The nature and scope of the SDF evolves, and the United States continues to be one of its main proponents; wanting Japan to pay more to maintain American military bases in Japan and to deploy forces to support American military efforts worldwide (Heng 2015). Nonetheless, Japan's security rests on the continued American defense commitment and its vast security apparatus located throughout the state (Szechenyi 2006). This commitment has roots in the post-World War II era.

Uneasy Surrender

Broken and defeated, Japan had no choice but to accept American occupation following the end of World War II (Goodman 1968; Schaller 1985). The end of one military government saw the rise of another; the Americans were intent on using their occupation to demilitarize and democratize Japan. Under General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP), the Americans set to work undoing Japan's vast empire and the social fabric that held it together (Eiji 2003). Former Japanese protectorates were divided amongst the allied powers (Finn 1992; Watt 2009). The Meji Constitution demanding total subordination to the state was discarded. Along with it came swift reforms—from land redistribution to labor laws and compulsory education. The Japanese were no longer subjects expected to serve the emperor, but subjects of the occupation and later citizens of democracy (Reischauer 1970). The former militarist government was thoroughly investigated. Competent mid to low-level bureaucrats remained in their posts whereas military leadership was purged, tried, and in

some cases executed (Scalapino 1976). Nearly 21,000 individuals were purged from government; only 2,000 were former bureaucrats (Noguchi 1998).

MacArthur directed officials within General Headquarters (GHQ)[28] to draft a new Japanese constitution; one that precluded the possibility of Japanese rearmament. The Americans set to work developing a parliamentary system to mimic that of the United Kingdom (Hellegers 2001). With it came the establishment of the Diet—a bicameral national legislature representatives from both chambers being popularly elected. Executive power was nested within the Cabinet, a body whose membership included, in addition to the prime minister, ministry leaders selected by the prime minister and approved by the Diet (Swenson-Wright 2005).

Perhaps no reform was as controversial as that of Article Nine; renouncing war and Japan's right to maintain a military:

> "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized" (Article 9, Constitution of Japan).

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida reasoned that Japan must accept these terms to end the occupation. Indeed, it is Yoshida that is given credit for saying that GHQ stood for "Go Home Quickly" (Dower 2000).

Both the United States and Japan assumed that this article would later be amended or withdrawn. Yoshida reflected,

> "There was this idea in the back of my mind that, whatever needed to be revised after we regained our independence could be revised then… But once a thing has been decided on, it is not so easy to have it altered" (Dower 2000).

[28] The bureaucratic arm of SCAP.

This article remains as it was in 1946. Conservative candidates to this day have not been able to lobby the two-thirds majority vote needed for constitutional amendment (Liff and Maeda 2018). While its interpretation has been stretched to allow the maintenance of a Self Defense Force, its purview is nonetheless restricted and subject to public controversy should its influence and activities grow (Abe and Tepperman 2013).

Beneath these vast political changes lay one, albeit critical, constant: the preservation of the monarchy. The status of the emperor following Japan's surrender was uncertain—both among the Japanese population and the victors themselves (Nakamura 2016). The United States, fearing a return to Japan's militant past, opted for a lighter peace despite calls for a punitive settlement (Finn 1992). The Americans reasoned that given the nature of their sweeping social, political, and economic reforms, the public would need a familiar institution to back the occupation for them to trust the Americans (Ruoff 2002). It was under this guise that an occupation that was supposed to last for one to two years grew to six. The emperor was allowed to remain as a symbol of the state but lacked his former privileges of political and spiritual rule (Weltzer 1998).

These changes were brought through close collaboration between GHQ and conservative politicians in Japan. The conservatives were the only political group at the time organized and enough to lead (Yoshida 2007). Leftist elements were harshly silenced under former military rule. Those who remained after the war were divided and were unable to challenge the influence of mainstream conservative politicians (MacDougall 1988). The conservatives were nonetheless uneasy with the new constitution—doubting the viability of American reforms and the speed at which they could be implemented. The Japanese criticized the American position as "straight and

direct," whereas theirs was "roundabout, twisted, and narrow," believing the public was not ready for democracy (Dower 2000). To pursue democracy would lead to "chaos, confusion, and communism" (Dower 2000). The U.S., tired of Japanese grandstanding, threatened to reveal their draft to the public— and thereby stir up pro-democracy factions who could force the conservatives out of power. General Whitney, a GHQ lawyer part of the American team drafting the new constitution, confronted conservative leaders Yoshida Shigeru[29], his aide Shirasu Jiro, and Masumoto Joji,[30]

> "…if you accept this Constitution you can be sure that the Supreme Commander will support your position. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the acceptance of the draft constitution is your only hope of survival…" (Whitney 1977).

Whitney noted their displeasure, stating, "Mr. Yoshida's face was a black cloud" (Whitney 1977). The conservatives had no choice but to accept the premises of the American draft. While it would go through a series of minor revisions through back and forth with Japanese politicians, its underlying logic remained the same.

The Diet's ratification of the constitution in 1946 was followed by further American arm-twisting. The U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of San Francisco[31] in 1951 unless the Japanese agreed to: 1) sign a parallel treaty with the nationalist regime in Taiwan, and 2) enter into a military alliance with the United States. The desirability of these terms varied. Japan did not want to close off the possibility of trade with mainland China given the state of the Japanese economy (Cha 2016). The war cost Japan one-third of its total wealth and anywhere from one-third to one-half of its potential income (Dower 2000). Nearly nine million people were homeless because of incessant American

[29] Prime Minister of Japan 1946-47 and 1948-54.
[30] Minister of State in charge of the Constitutional Problems Investigation Committee 1945-46,
[31] Treaty that ended World War II in the Pacific.

bombing campaigns (Fedman and Karacas 2012); Conway-Lanz 2013). There was high need for politicians to deliver on promises of economic recovery.

But pursuing an alliance with the United States would enable Japan to forgo military spending to focus on building the economy—known as the Yoshida Doctrine (MacDougall 1988). Yoshida argued that the American security guarantee was worth yielding to because:

> "…the day [for rearmament] will come naturally when our livelihood recovers. It may sound devious, but let the Americans handle [Japan's security] until then. It is indeed our Heaven-bestowed good fortune that the Constitution bans arms" (Pyle 2007).

It is this sentiment that underscored and continues to influence the trajectory of U.S.-Japan relations. Japan is often referred to an ideal ally by the United States—especially in comparison to other allies in the Indo-Pacific including South Korea, Taiwan,[32] and the Philippines (FRUS Jan 11, 1968). It rarely challenges American leadership over matters of foreign policy (Ali and Stewart 2023). This is not to say these allies do not fight, but rather that they are quick to resolve their differences when they do (Baldor and Lee 2023). Each ally knows its place. Japan accepts the authority of the United States in exchange for security. The United States provides this security in exchange for influence over Japan's defense policy and to maintain its influence in the Pacific.

Prior work accepts this logic at face value, rarely questioning why and how Japan manages to stay in American good graces. This is not a coincidence. I show that Japanese domestic politics were set up by U.S. occupation forces to reflect American interests. This led to the development of a security apparatus that upheld the American alliance as

[32] Ended 1980.

the key to Japanese security and a war weary public who viewed, and continues to view, the possibility of rearmament with skepticism (Yeo 2011).

In agreement with H2, Japan has no need to coerce the United States; it rarely disagrees with American policy. This is not to say that Japan lacks agency in this relationship, only that it exerts its influence through more limited means. This dynamic is most salient during periods of low regime security in the off-chance allies may disagree with one another over matters of their shared security. When insecure, Japan has greater leverage to negotiate and persuade the U.S. by pointing to instability its domestic politics, supporting H3. In contrast, the regime is more likely to acquiesce to American demands when secure because it lacks leverage. When secure, Japan is unlikely to coerce the United States because it cannot credibly threaten American interests by arguing its regime may collapse, again supporting H3.

The U.S.-Japan case demonstrates the importance of institutional autonomy in understanding when allies may or may not disagree with one another. Further, it highlights the importance of understanding the protégé's domestic political situation to predict how allies are likely to navigate their disagreement. The possibility of coercing the United States was and remains largely untenable in Japanese politics. Japan continues to rely on the United States for its defense (Smith 2019). I outline this logic below and Figure 2 and describe each episode further below.

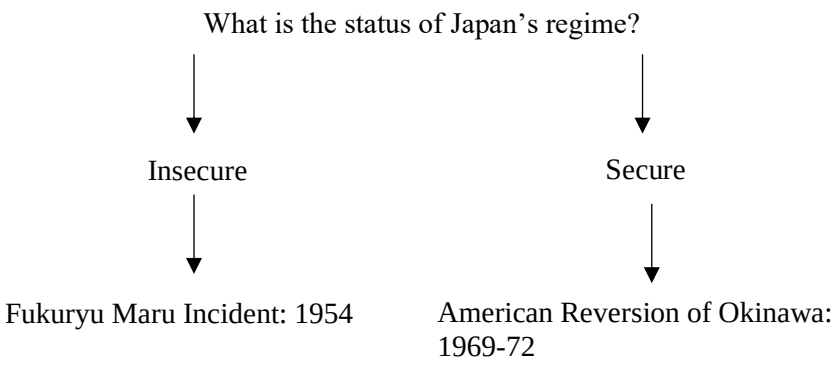


Figure 3: Japanese Regime Security

1954: Low Regime Security: The *Fukuryu Maru* Incident

Shared Fate and Domestic Politics

The Cold War pushed the United States into an atomic frenzy (Plous 1985; Silverstein 1989). The American quest for nuclear supremacy led to a consequential test, Castle Bravo, on the morning of March 1, 1954 (Brown 2014). The United States detonated its first hydrogen bomb near the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. This was the largest thermonuclear test ever carried out by the U.S., releasing an unprecedented fifteen megatons of energy into the atmosphere (Rowberry 2014). It was one thousand times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Japan during the war (Smith-Norris 2016). And a Japanese fishing boat, the *Fukuryu Maru*,[33] found itself a mere eighty-five miles from it (Smith-Norris 1997).[34]

Having left Japan in late January and with little luck fishing farther north, the *Fukuryu Maru* set toward the Bikini Atoll in search of warmer water. This fateful decision led to the exposure of the ship's twenty-three crewmembers to radioactive

[33] Meaning Lucky Dragon #5; also referred to as the Lucky Dragon Incident or Castle Bravo Incident.
[34] The U.S. did proclaim a danger zone several months prior to the BRAVO test around the Bikini and Enewetak Islands. However, it did not state when testing would occur; nor did it properly calculate the blast zone. State Department records report the *Fukuryu Maru* was fourteen miles outside of the danger zone (Smith-Norris 1997).

fallout. The crew was showered in white ash three hours after detonation and suffered from severe headaches, nausea, and burns within the first week of exposure. The United States desperately tried to cover its tracks. The head of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) overseeing the Castle series testing, Lewis Strauss, refused to notify the public. Strauss further pressured American personnel that they "not make anything public on these matters" (Smith-Norris 1997).

But the facts were slowly brought to light as the Japanese press picked up the story. By March 16, the Japanese Foreign Office notified the American embassy in Tokyo that not only were the twenty-three crew members of the *Fukuryu Maru* showing signs of radiation exposure, but that some of the contaminated cargo was sent to markets in Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Osaka, and Kyoto (Gluck and Hunt 1990). Adding to this upset was the delicate political situation in Japan. Japanese domestic politics were in disarray (Hoshiro 2022). A series of austerity measures put in place in the late 1940s to combat triple-digit inflation had yet to show significant results for public wellbeing (Ito and Hoshi 2020). The American Ambassador to Japan, John M. Allison, wrote to the State Department in early 1954:

> "It is difficult to over-emphasize problems the Japanese Government has faced and will continue to face in formulating budget wherein only advances are in defense items. There has been and continues to be considerable agitation against decreases, particularly in such items as social security and welfare funds. At least four Ministry of Finance officials have been physically beaten by irate mobs protesting against budget cuts. Threats to other Finance officials have been so common that budget examiners have been taken to and from work in armored cars and have met in various places throughout Tokyo other than Finance Ministry in order to avoid protesting mobs" (FRUS Jan. 12, 1954).

The AEC was "gravely concerned" following the incident's leak and the differing approaches of the American and Japanese government in addressing the issue made matters worse (FRUS Mar. 16, 1954).

Prime Minister Yoshida avoided addressing the incident, instead ordering his Foreign Minister, Katsuo Okazaki, to seek damages from the United States. The Diet, responding to public outcry, pushed back. Representatives demanded reassurances from Yoshida that other ships would not be contaminated and to pressure the U.S. to stop testing in the Pacific altogether (Cohen and Iriye 1990). Japanese medical experts similarly rebuked the Yoshida and Eisenhower governments and insisted the crew remain under their care. The United States refused to share information on the testing, prohibiting proper diagnosis and treatment of the victims (Smith-Norris 1997).

The United States instead sent two of its own experts, Dr. John Morton[35] and Merril Eisenbud[36] and demanded that Japan surrender the *Fukuryu Maru* to the U.S. Navy—which Japan refused (Homei 2013). American embassy officials in Tokyo were doubtful about the outlook of the situation:

> "We doubt, however, as [the] situation now stands and after successive representations to Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, that our further preachments for cooperation will produce more than limited sharing of Japanese medial investigations. If accurate knowledge [of] true condition [of] patient[s] are sufficiently important to our national health interests to make denial of direct US access matter of grave concern, we shall probably have to move to some form or other of coercion and sanctions. This will require major effort in view [of] emotionalism that surrounds [the] subject here, weakness of government, entrenched position of government scientists and bureaucrats, and jingoistic sensationalism of press. We doubt that threat to withhold compensation would be enough, but if we go in with something more severe, we should be prepared to see it through" (FRUS Apr. 12, 1954).[37]

Reaching a Settlement

The U.S. refusal to accept responsibility compounded by the experience of Japan as a victim of American nuclear weapons only nine years prior sent shockwaves through

[35] Director of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Hiroshima.
[36] Director of the AEC's Health and Safety Laboratory.
[37] Footnote from (FRUS Apr. 8, 1954).

the Japanese government (Smith-Norris 2016). This public outrage gave the Yoshida government leverage in its negotiations with the American government despite its own series of scandals—including allegations of bribery and opposition to his push for a defense agency (Carlson and Reed 2018). Ambassador Allison reported back to the State Department on the status of U.S.-Japan relations two months after the incident, stating "conclusions are unpleasant, some even ominous," further writing, "severe deficiencies in [the Japanese government's] security, administrative discipline, emotional stability and cooperativeness have been exposed (FRUS May 20, 1954). He confirmed the Yoshida government's precarious position:

> "[This] Incident coincided with mounting government crisis and growing Cabinet fatigue. Fifth Yoshida Cabinet was being harried in Diet, shaken by scandals and procurators probes, and threatened by gathering revolts inside Liberal Party and by Conservative merger maneuvers outside its control. It was compelled to concentrate its depleted energies on its own survival while working through a difficult legislative calendar. To make matters worse, bureaucratic dissatisfaction was brewing at national level because of government and party deficiencies and at local level because of Cabinet's attempts to recentralize administration. The press was using all this to whip up its continuing campaign against a government which appeared all but tottering (FRUS May 20, 1954).

Underlying these trends were the conflicting positions over both governments in negotiating compensation payments (Jones 2010). In addition to compensation to the victims and their families, Japan wanted repayment for expenses incurred for the crew's care. It also sought compensation for the fishing industry for contaminated catches and lost profits from American nuclear testing near fishing waters—with total claims for reaching over $7 million (FRUS June 3, 1954). The United States refused to accept wrongdoing and instead offered a one-time payment of $150,000 to Japan to distribute to the victims with the expectation that this would end the ordeal (FRUS May 29, 1954).

The refusal of either side to acquiesce led to a four-month standoff. Dissatisfaction with the Yoshida government grew within the Diet among Socialists and anti-Yoshida conservatives for being too soft on the U.S. and poor management of the economy (FRUS May 29, 1954; Kohno 1997). His Cabinet resigned rather than face a vote of no confidence with Hatoyama Ichiro, an anti-Yoshida conservative, being elected as prime minister (Sims 2001). As opposed to Yoshida, Hatoyama's government moved quickly to end the *Fukuryu Maru* negotiations.

Hatoyama's government was motivated to deliver on this issue early in its tenure to boost its popularity for the next election while maintaining goodwill with the American government (Itoh 2015). The Eisenhower administration was similarly eager to end the divide— recognizing that they could not dictate a settlement to Japan as they originally hoped. The United States upped its offer to a one-time payment of $1.5 million; Hatoyama's Foreign Minister, Shigemitsu Mamour, would not accept less than $2 million. The United States gave in and agreed to pay $1,850,000 more than its original offer of $150,000 (Cohen and Iriye 1990). It was the shared fate between allies that facilitated this outcome. In his remarks to the National Editorial Association, Eisenhower reflected on the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance to American security:

> "Over in the western Pacific, the key to its [the world's] defense is Japan. Japan compromises 85 million people—industrious, hardworking, inventive. Actually, the power that they developed against us in World War II was such as to be frightening when we saw what they could do alone. Consequently, it becomes absolutely mandatory to us, and to our safety, that the Japanese nation does not fall under the domination of the Iron Curtain countries, or specifically the Kremlin. If the Kremlin controls them, all of that great war-making capacity would be turned against the free world. All of the soldiers, all of the armies, all of the air force, they could use. Japan would be given the task of producing all the great navies that they need. And the Pacific would become a Communist lake (FRUS Editorial Note).

Behind the ideological overtures characteristic of American foreign policy during this era is a very real sense that Japan is vital to U.S. security interests. The United States and Japan had a shared fate; the U.S. could not lose Japan without real consequences befalling on itself. In agreement with H3, it was this sentiment that guided American decision-making when agreeing to Japanese demands.

However, this logic does not imply that Japan coerced the United States to derive this outcome—nor that it disagreed with the basic premise of monetary compensation. Supporting H2, Japan in many ways gave into American pressure. Both the Yoshida and Hatoyama governments were conscious of the importance of the military alliance with the United States for Japan's security. The institutional structure imposed during the American occupation on Japanese politics inhibited Japan from having the means to effectively coerce the United States because Japan was forbidden to maintain a military (Caprio and Sugita 2007). The United States was their sole guarantee of survival; they had no choice but to cooperate with the Americans (Schaller 1985). This logic becomes more pronounced in later decades under a comparatively stable regime.

1968-72: High Regime Security: The Revision of Okinawa

Shared Fate and Domestic Politics

The American occupation of Okinawa had long been a symbol of U.S.-Japan relations; the U.S. the protector and Japan the protectee. Japanese recovery was in full swing led by conservative prime minister Eisaku Sato. A 1969 U.S. intelligence estimate notes:

> "A fundamental source of strength for the Sato government at this juncture is the generally good economic situation. This seemingly endless Japanese boom has brought full employment and improved living standards to virtually all levels of society…Despite persistent criticism of the LDP for failure to provide adequately

> for social welfare and similar needs, conservative leadership has become identified in the public mind with national prosperity" (FRUS Feb. 17, 1969).

By the late 1960s, the United States had over six hundred thousand troops in East Asia (Kim 1973). Okinawa was "the most important U.S. military base in the Pacific," and its continued use in support of operations in Korea and Vietnam was vital to American interests (FRUS Feb. 16, 1968; FRUS Mar. 12, 1969). However, the Japanese public had grown increasingly weary of the constant American military presence and its many consequences (Aldous 2003). American bases brought noise, pollution, prostitution, and occasionally violence (Cooley 2012). The Sato government struggled to effectively reconcile the demands of the Japanese public for the reversion of Okinawa with the expectations of the United States in return for its continued protection (Hooey 2003).

The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Alexis Johnson, wrote to the state department following a meeting with the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miki Takeo, "the issue of Okinawa is perhaps the major outstanding problem in U.S./Japan relations" (FRUS Aug. 21, 1968). Later reports confirm the importance of Okinawa to the Japanese public, stating "there is no doubt Okinawa is the number one national issue in Japan" (FRUS Dec. 24, 1968).

The prospect of the United States returning control of Okinawa to Japan was not in question; both parties agreed on reversion (Kim 1973; Kei 2002). In dispute were three issues underlying the terms of this reversion. First was the American right to station and potentially use nuclear-armed B-52s to support its interests in Asia and the extent of

American versus Japanese authority in governing Okinawa (Mendel 1975).[38] Ambassador Johnson assured the State Department that he would not give "any impression that we were prepared to give Japan any voice in how we use our bases in Okinawa" (FRUS Feb. 17, 1968). However, the Japanese political situation necessitated at least giving the appearance that the U.S. would hear Japan out. In a conversation with Nixon, Johnson indicated that "the Japanese measure the ability of their leaders to get along with the U.S.," including securing favorable negotiation terms (FRUS Apr. 30, 1969).

Nixon later summarized the challenge of negotiating with Japan as "schizophrenia" in its position:

> "They like to be told what to do but then they resent it when we tell them. There is a fine line between U.S. guidance and pressure. They benefit if they can appear to be on their own. We are in a solid position but they don't like our bases, our planes, etc. The opposition exploits this.[39] We in turn provide a nuclear umbrella" (FRUS Apr. 30, 1969).

Second was the opposition to American base presence by the Okinawans—many of whom were eager to end the American occupation (Egami 1994). Johnson noted, "Sato cannot exercise any control over them, in fact, he is their victim and prime target" (Feb. 17, 1968). Okinawans had just elected Yara Chobyo as Chief Executive—an outcome both the Sato government and the United States had hoped against. Yara, a proponent of reducing American base presence, was nonetheless someone both governments believed "we can work with" (FRUS Nov. 11, 1968). His election did however increase the speed at which both the U.S. and Japan believed reversion would need to occur (FRUS Nov. 23, 1968).

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[38] American bases on Japan proper were subject to the authority of the Japanese government. Contemporary debates centered on the extent to which an Okinawa reversion would be "homeland-level" (Kim 1973).
[39] Leftist political parties in Japan.

Third was Japan's "nuclear allergy" (FRUS Jan. 24, 1968). As former victims of American nuclear weapons, the Japanese public were especially sensitive to the possibility of their long-term stationing in Okinawa (Tanaka 1970). The legality of maintaining nuclear weapons in Japan was also in question given its Article 9 obligations. Sato's Foreign Minister, Aichi Kiichi, summarized this in a conversation with Nixon:

> "Japan's Constitution was unique with respect to defense; it severely restricted any overseas military cooperation… and Japan's unique views on nuclear weapons, which derived from the fact that Japan was the only country to have suffered from their use" (FRUS Jun. 2, 1969).

This concern did not preclude mediation but did require sensitivity in constructing an agreement that would be palatable to the Japanese public (Takizawa 1971). Indeed, Aichi noted that the presence of the U.S. "was essential in the broadest terms to the security of the area as a whole," and that Japan would without question support its continuance (FRUS Jun. 2, 1969).

The American Embassy in Japan affirmed the need to meet the Japanese halfway because of their shared fate while still recognizing America's upper hand:

> "Because of [the] intimacy and interdependence of [the] Japan-American relationship, we have no lack of tools to quietly pressure Japanese policy in [a] favorable direction. Most of all despite current difficulties, there exists in Japan a broad reservoir of good will towards [the] U.S…" (FRUS Jun. 9, 1971).

It was this sentiment that guided negotiations and the relative non-issue of Okinawa's reversion at the highest levels of negotiation from the United States to Japan.[40]

[40] Following the base agreement, there were spats between Japanese authorities (supported by the United States) and citizens contesting the revision agreement—both in principle and its terms (Ayako 2008). The general consensus nonetheless maintained the importance of American military presence to Japanese security (Komatsu 2018).

Negotiation and Accord

There was much at stake in these negotiations for Sato. Pursuing talks with the United States would require him to reverse his "blank-slate" policy in which he chose to keep the future of Okinawan reversion open and without preconditions (Kei 2002). Following his 1968 announcement for a third term, he pledged, "If reelected, I will go to America next summer and accomplish the reversion of Okinawa" (Wakaizumi 2002). Sato himself stated he staked his "political life on [the] Okinawa reversion" (Wakaizumi 2002). His Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) maintained a comfortable majority in the Diet following the 1969 general elections (Brynildsen 1977). It was time for Sato to make good on his promise. His domestic prospects were strong; in a memo from Kissinger to Nixon before a meeting with Sato, Kissinger wrote:

> "Sato, whom you know from previous contacts, has been generally cooperative and understanding of U.S. viewpoints. He has been Prime Minister for five years and is in a strong political position. With a general election coming up early next year, his two main political problems are Okinawa reversion and student violence, but so far he seems to have handled both to the satisfaction of most Japanese. Japan is enjoying its fourth straight year of record-breaking economic prosperity" (FRUS Nov. 18, 1969).

Japan was prepared to negotiate with the Americans; with securing a U.S. commitment that nuclear weapons would never be kept on Okinawa as its top priority. Close advisor and confidant to Sato, Kei Wakaizumi, told the prime minister,

> "We cannot afford to concede our position that Okinawa should be returned without nuclear weapons. Whatever happens, we need to convince the Americans to accept this basic condition. Our difficulty is that the Americans claim that even once the nuclear weapons have been removed, they want to retain the right to reintroduce them in the event of an emergency" (Wakaizumi 2002).

The United States, cognizant of these interests, was confident of its influence over Japan and in the robustness of its nuclear umbrella so long as its forces were allowed to remain with relatively favorable terms (Komine 2014). A 1970 National Intelligence Estimate

concluded that “Japan will want the U.S. military presence” reduced and “greater Japanese voice” in its use. It additionally notes that rather than issues concerning military basing, “economic issues are likely to be a greater source of friction” between allies (FRUS Jun. 25, 2023).

Following an eighteen-month period ironing out the details of these terms, the basic principles of allied interests remained, and an agreement was signed June 17, 1971 (Komine 2013). The United States maintained sizable influence over Japan’s interests and secured favorable basing rights. These terms included that the U.S. would keep eighty-eight major military facilities and return forty-six minor ones to Japan, securing $320 million over a five-year period from Japan for the facilities the U.S. would be returning, and that Japan would assume major responsibilities for local defense by dispatching 6,800 troops to Okinawa by July 1, 1973 (Kim 1973). Japan secured Okinawa’s reversion and a commitment from the United States that it would remain free of nuclear weapons. It was also assured of its continued commitment to its defense and the viability of its nuclear umbrella (Kei 2002).

These terms were clearly unequal. In many ways the U.S. took much more from Japan than it gave. Nonetheless, the agreement was solid; Okinawa was returned to Japan on May 15, 1972. It withstood a series of tense economic spats over textiles and Nixon’s trip to China[41]—all part of the “Nixon shocks” (Shabecoff 1970). Japan accepted this arrangement because it believed the U.S. security guarantee was essential to its defense as predicted by H2. Its domestic institutions were designed to ensure this sentiment; Japan could not maintain its own military and signed away its right to partake in war

[41] Nixon did not consult nor inform Japan of his trip, which the Sato government found both embarrassing and insulting (Shabecoff 1970).

(Schaller 1985). While the specifics of these terms have come under question throughout the history of allied relations, the basic premise remains: the United States is essential to Japanese security, and it will not undertake actions which may cause undue harm to this relationship.

Japan is unlikely to disagree with American strategic interests nor challenge them. Japan is unlikely to coerce the United States because its interests largely reflect that of its patron. In addition to providing robust support for H2, the dynamics of this case follow the logic of H3. When insecure, Japan had greater agency to push back against American demands and the U.S. actively reflected on Japan's domestic problems when negotiating. Japan did agree with the basic premises of the American position but leveraged its political problems to pressure the U.S. to up its offer of monetary compensation.

As predicted by H3, this trend shifts as the Japanese political situation stabilizes. Japan lacked the leverage it had during the *Fukuryu Maru* incident during the Okinawan reversion negotiations under the Sato administration. Sato led a relatively secure cabinet whereas the Yoshida cabinet left office during the *Fukuryu Maru* negotiations to avoid a vote of no confidence in the Diet. As noted above, the Japanese political environment did indeed influence American decision-making in its negotiations with Japan in both episodes.

Conclusion

Regime security is a strong predictor of a protégé's likelihood of coercing their patron. The U.S.-Japan case highlights the importance of history and institutional design in understanding allied interests and when they may align or conflict. The institutional structure of Japan was designed by the United States during a six-year occupation

following the end of World War II. The United States designed institutions to reflect American interests and to prohibit Japan from building a robust military. Japan therefore relies heavily on the United States for its protection and its interests regularly align with that of the U.S.

In the off chance that allied interests do diverge, the scope of allied disagreement is usually limited. I show that as Japan's regime security increased, it lacked tools to coerce the United States to give more favorable terms in the Okinawa reversion. Japan accepted the unequal terms of the agreement as a means to preserve their security backed by American military protection and to fulfill its public promises to resume control over Okinawa.

This evidence suggests that alliances in which the patron dictates the protégé's institutions are likely to be cooperative and coercion is unlikely to be a strong theme present in allied relations. This case stands in sharp contrast to that of the U.S.-ROK alliance in which South Korea possesses tremendous agency to coerce the United States and did act on this when regime security was low. Japan is therefore not an inherently better ally than South Korea, but rather, Japan is less likely to disagree with, and thus coerce, the United States. One must understand the alliance relations themselves to predict when and how they may deviate from trends that support conventional wisdom. I expand on this theme along with several policy implications that stem from it in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Protégés can indeed coerce their stronger patron for greater autonomy. As these cases demonstrate, the method through which this coercion is exerted is nuanced and requires a careful understanding of the relationship in question. The United States designed its alliance network in Asia following the end of World War II to ensure its control (Cha 2016). I show that this system varied in the extent to which American control could hold out against push back from their weaker allies. This theory not only highlights the often overlooked agency of an alliance protégé, but also has clear policy implications. I first recap the project chapters, noting the relevance of each to addressing the research puzzle. I then provide a series of policy recommendations for alliance management based on the theory's logic and related findings.

Overview of Project and Findings

Within this dissertation, I ask: how can a protégé coerce their patron for greater autonomy in international politics? I refer to coercion as threatening violence to get one's target to behave in a way they would not otherwise (Schelling 1966; Lake 2011). Autonomy is a state's control over its own affairs, especially its domestic politics (Schweller 2004). I evaluate the American alliance network in Asia as it is composed of a series of bilateral alliance networks favoring American hierarchy (Cha 2016; Izumikawa 2020). Prior literature in alliance politics largely dismisses the role of weaker allies in alliance relations, much less the possibility that they can coerce their stronger patron (Snyder 1991; Beckley 2015; Cha 2016; Yarhi-Milo et al. 2016)

I argue instead that protégés can have a major and understudied impact on alliance relations; they can and do coerce their stronger partners for greater autonomy. It

is the shared fate between allies that makes this coercion possible. I define shared fate as an institutional tie that commits one's honor, obligation, and reputation to the preservation of that institution—an alliance for the purpose of my theory. It is, however, unlikely that all protégés leverage this shared fate to coerce their protégé—some may accept their patron's authority and rarely challenge its interests. I therefore ask two interrelated questions. First, when can allied preferences diverge? The U.S. designed its alliance system in East Asia to decrease the likelihood of its allies challenging its preferences (Cha 2016). Theorizing conditions under which allies designed to be relatively cohesive can disagree is therefore an important first step in addressing this puzzle.

I theorize a protégé's control over their defense policy and its execution to answer this question. I argue that the independence of a protégé's defense ministry and military from oversight by their patron or other rival ministries predicts the likelihood of allied disagreement. A protégé with a controlled defense ministry is unlikely to challenge their patron because they are likely to draft policy that reflects the patron's interests. Even if a protégé has an independent military, they are unlikely to challenge their patron because the military is tasked with executing policy from above. Similarly, protégés with both an independent defense ministry and military are unlikely to challenge their patron because they don't need to; they have control over their own defense policy and its execution. They can disregard their patron's objections to pursue their own interests.

However, an independent defense ministry allows a protégé to make policies not in line with their patron's interests (Feaver 1999; Brooks 2019). This can create problems for protégés with controlled militaries, or those under their patron's command. Patrons

are unlikely to support the protégé's execution of defense policy that runs contrary to the patron's interests. Protégés with independent defense ministries but controlled militaries are thus more likely to challenge their patron.

Second, and if allied disagreement is likely, I ask: how can a protégé coerce their patron for greater autonomy? A need for security may drive a protégé's motivation to form an alliance with a more powerful partner, but a desire for autonomy supersedes security concerns following alliance formation. The basis for this lies in the protégé's fear of abandonment by their patron (Snyder 1991; 2007). Protégés can leverage their own regime security to pry control away from an overbearing patron. Patrons then face a dilemma, either having to make significant concessions to their protégé or risk its collapse. I hypothesize that as a protégé's regime security decreases, they are more likely to coerce their patron. Insecure protégés threaten their own collapse when they run out of options. What makes these threats credible to the patron is that the protégé does not have to lie about them—they are visible to both parties (Fravel 2005). It is the shared fate between allies that forces the patron's hand to give into their protégés demands for greater autonomy. Secure protégés on the other hand, are less likely to coerce their protégé; they don't need to. A secure protégé can justify going without resources their patron may provide for their defense should they find the patron's terms intolerable (Jackson 2007; McMahon and Slantchev 2015; Bowers and Hiim 2020; Pempel 2021).

I test the theory with a series of case studies on the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliances to map out a protégé's logic to coerce—or not—their patron for greater autonomy during periods of high and low regime security. I leverage the within and between case variance in this qualitative research.

I first examine the U.S.-ROK alliance, a case in which a patron has control over their protégé's military but lacks this control over the protégé's defense ministry. I find that insecure South Korean regimes leveraged their own vulnerabilities to coerce the United States to grant their demands for greater autonomy, like Park Chung Hee's clandestine nuclear program. It was the shared fate between allies that made these threats credible. Failure of the United States to save a clearly downtrodden, but anti-communist, regime could have had significant consequences—from state collapse to wider conflict on the Peninsula and beyond (Christensen 2011). In contrast, secure regimes do not need to coerce. They can provide for themselves or justify going without resources they would seek from a patron as the Kim Dae Jung administration did with its Sunshine Policy.

I then turn to the U.S.-Japan alliance, a case in which a patron has control over the protégé's defense institutions and military. The United States is the primary guarantee of Japan's defense (Heng 2015). Its Defense Agency was only recently turned into a cabinet level ministry and renamed the Ministry of Defense, which still operates under a limited mandate due to both constitutional and public constraints (Komatsu 2018). The U.S.-Japan case is an important contrast to that of the U.S.-ROK alliance. It highlights the conditionality surrounding the desirability of a protégé to challenge their patron and their ability to coerce, as Japan did during the Fukuryu Maru Incident. The United States set up the modern Japanese state to reflect its interests and undermined the ability of Japan to have an autonomous military that could credibly challenge the United States. The U.S. therefore did not need to leave itself an out with Japan as it did with South Korea. The U.S. was confident of its leverage over Japan and this informs outcomes such as the

reversion of Okinawa. These findings have strong implications for American foreign policy.

Policy Implications

There are several policy implications that stem from this project, especially for the American management of its alliance network in Asia. First relates to a key challenge for the United States and the Biden administration currently and is the challenge of simultaneously deterring China while reassuring Asian allies (Baker and Kanno-Youngs 2022; Wong and Schmitt 2023). My work demonstrates the futility of the U.S. maintaining its foreign policy status quo; forcing its allies to pick a side. Much of this strategy has roots in the Cold War, an era that gave root to the American alliance networks in Europe and Asia (Mastny 2013). However, the United States can no longer view its alliances as black or white—either being with the U.S. or against it. The United States must learn to navigate shades of gray, recognizing that its Asian allies may at times cooperate relatively closely with China through a host of issue domains (Ford and Goldgeier 2021; Duehren and Ip 2023). This cooperation is not brought out of a protégé's unruliness but rather from their history and strategic reality.

Second, China was Asia's hegemon for several centuries (Goh 2013; Kang and Haggard 2020). Maintaining good relations with the Middle Kingdom through the tributary system was a fact of life for surrounding kingdoms in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam (Kang 2003; 2005; 2010). It was through this system that Chinese culture spread as states emulated China out of respect for its authority and from a desire to increase its own standing within the system itself (Huang and Kang 2022). Traces of these historical

ties are still present today. Indeed, the Korean script, developed in the mid 1400s, was designed to condense and simplify Chinese characters (Haarmann 1993).

In addition to centuries of history, China is without a doubt an economic powerhouse (Lin 2011). In addition to the importance of Chinese industry to the U.S. economy, it is a top trading partner for many American allies (Green 2023). This is unsurprising given the proximity of China to U.S. allies in Asia (Harada 2020). Rather than demanding these allies decrease trade with China out of security concerns, the United States should recognize the autonomy of its allies. They are unlikely to acquiesce to such demands and have the political capital at home to support withstanding American pressure (Singh 2015; Choi 2020).

This does not mean that American allies do not have problems with China; they do (Kim 2015; Yeung 2020). Rather, the best way for the United States to navigate growing Chinese influence is by allowing its Asian allies greater latitude to maintain their own relations with China. This not only preserves unity in alliance ties but also sends a clear signal to China of the credibility of the American alliance network. Alliances defined by infighting lack credibility (Morrow 1993; Fearon 1997; Leeds et al. 2000; Fuhrmann and Sechser 2014; Narang and Mehta 2019; Horowitz et al. 2018; Johnson and Joiner 2021; Johnson and Wolford 2023a). There is something to be said for not letting one's opponent see them sweat. American alliance relations in Asia span over seventy years. The U.S. should be confident enough to recognize the historical precedent of allied interactions with China and the strategic necessity for these interactions to continue without seeing them as a threat to alliance ties. Thus, the best way to simultaneously

deter China and reassure allies is to accept their economic and diplomatic relations with China.

Recent events support the need to reevaluate the U.S. all-or-nothing approach to alliance management in Asia. House Speaker Pelosi's controversial visit to Taiwan, an island China claims sovereignty over, in August 2022. Although meant to both deter China and signal solidarity with American allies, her ill-advised trip sent both its allies and China into a tailspin (McCarthy 2023). China launched a full-forced response toward regional actors rather than the United States directly; staging military exercises that crossed the de facto boundary line in the Taiwan Strait in addition to firing missiles over Taiwan and Japan's exclusive economic zone (Rising 2022). South Korean President Yoon snubbed Pelosi's subsequent visit and sent his Foreign Minister the following week to China (Shin 2022). ASEAN states—including several American allies—quickly released a statement supporting the One-China Policy to avoid reprisal (Grossman 2022). These insights in combination with my findings demonstrate the need to challenge the conventional wisdom that protégés possess little agency in alliance politics. Rather than being subjects of a patron's whims, these protégés can call the shots, majorly influencing the trajectory of allied relations.

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CHAPTER 4: U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

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